

The Adventures of ODYSSEUS

by ANDREW LANG



*Illustrated with four colour plates
and line drawings in the text by
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TO

H. RIDER HAGGARD

EDITOR'S NOTE

The Adventures of Odysseus was first published in 1907 as pages 1-171 of *Tales of Troy and Greece*; the volume also included *The Story of the Golden Fleece*, which had been published as a little book in 1903, and short retellings of the legends of Theseus and Perseus. These three have been omitted here, as Charles Kingsley had already retold them at much greater length in *The Heroes*, which is to be included in the Children's Illustrated Classics.

At his publisher's request, but contrary to his own wish, Andrew Lang called his hero by the Roman version of his name, 'Ulysses'. In this edition the correct Greek name, Odysseus, is used—as Lang used it in all his more learned works on Homer, in his translations of the *Iliad* and *Odyssey*, and in the thrilling romance of the final adventures of Odysseus and Helen, *The World's Desire*, which he wrote in collaboration with his friend Rider Haggard. In 1907 the old habit of calling the Greek gods and heroes by their Latin names, though dying out, was still fairly common, particularly in schools: 'Ulysses' endured longer than most, partly on account of one of Tennyson's most famous poems.

In the 'Note' appended to *Tales of Troy and Greece*, Lang wrote: 'The story of Ulysses is taken mainly from the *Iliad*, the *Odyssey* and the *Post Homeric* of Quintus Smyrnaeus. As we have no detailed account of the stealing of the Palladium by Ulysses, use has been made of Helen's tale about his entry into Troy in the disguise of a beaten beggar.'

Lang used many other ancient Greek authors for his retelling of the fall of Troy, for it was a subject that he had studied with particular care; but in a lighter vein he wrote to his brother John on 14th December 1906: 'I have done a lot of a Greek and Trojan book for children. I mainly stick to the Greek of Homer and several other authors, but I had to invent a point or two, where the old Greek poems are lost.'

Nevertheless Lang's *Adventures of Odysseus* is the best and most authentic version that has ever been written for young readers. He goes on in his 'Note' to say: 'The descriptions of costume, arms and mode of life are derived from Homer, and from the Mycenaean relics discovered

in the last thirty years by Dr Schliemann, Mr A. J. Evans and many other explorers.'

Lang was writing his scholarly study *Homer and His Age* at the same time as *The Adventures of Odysseus*, and he wrote an even more important work on the subject, *The World of Homer*, in 1910. In both books he suggested that Homer was telling or writing about a real civilization and real legends of which the details had been handed down for several hundred years from the days of a great Mycenaean Age. Few people then agreed with him, and Evans (later Sir Arthur) was already following a false scent by way of the 'Minoan' civilization in Crete of which the Mycenaean in Greece was thought to be only a pale reflection centring round a few Minoan colonies.

Discoveries during the last ten years, beginning with the decipherment of 'Linear B', the writing of the Mycenaeans, by Michael Ventris in 1952—which turned out to be written in Greek—have changed the whole picture of the world of Homer. It seems that Lang was right, and that an early Greek civilization, the Mycenaean, occupied Greece for more than five hundred years, and in the end conquered and colonized Crete. The golden age of the old Mycenaean world came between 1200 and 1100 B.C., during which time the real siege of Troy occurred, and the real heroes lived of whom Homer told. The *Iliad* and *Odyssey* were written about three hundred years later, after the Dorian invasion had driven many Greeks into exile in Asia Minor, taking with them the lays and legends of the end of the Mycenaean Age.

In this edition of *The Adventures of Odysseus* the attempt has been made to show the heroes of Troy and Greece in the Mycenaean setting in which they really lived, and as Lang wished us to see them. Instead of the usual armour and dress of 'classical' Greece of five or six hundred years later, Miss Kiddell-Monroe has used the latest discoveries of scholars and archaeologists to present Odysseus 'in his habit as he lived', using such weapons and armour, such cups and jewels and everyday objects as are being found in more and more sites in Greece and Crete surviving from the days when a real Agamemnon was High King in golden Mycenae.

ROGER LANCELYN GREEN.

CONTENTS

	PAGE
<i>Editor's Note</i>	vii
PART I	
ODYSSEUS THE SACKER OF CITIES	
I. The Boyhood and Parents of Odysseus	3
II. How People Lived in the Time of Odysseus	7
III. The Wooing of Helen of the Fair Hands	12
IV. The Stealing of Helen	16
V. Trojan Victories	33
VI. Battle at the Ships	41
VII. The Slaying and Avenging of Patroclus	48
VIII. The Cruelty of Achilles, and the Ransoming of Hector	56
IX. How Odysseus Stole the Luck of Troy	59
X. The Battles with the Amazons and Memnon—the Death of Achilles	69
XI. Odysseus Sails to Seek the Son of Achilles—the Valour of Eurypylus	81
XII. The Slaying of Paris	89
XIII. How Odysseus Invented the Device of the Horse of Troy	95
XIV. The End of Troy and the Saving of Helen	99

PART II

THE WANDERINGS OF ODYSSEUS

I. The Slaying of Agamemnon and the Sorrows of Odysseus	107
II. The Enchantress Circe, the Land of the Dead, the Sirens	117
III. The Whirlpool, the Sea Monster and the Cattle of the Sun	125
IV. How Telemachus Went to Seek his Father	130

CONTENTS

	PAGE
V. How Odysseus Escaped from the Island of Calypso	136
VI. How Odysseus was Wrecked, yet Reached Phaeacia	141
VII. How Odysseus Came to his Own Country, and for Safety Disguised Himself as an Old Beggar Man	152
VIII. Odysseus Comes Disguised as a Beggar to His Own Palace .	161
IX. The Slaying of the Wooers	171
X. The End	177

ILLUSTRATIONS

COLOUR

Helen came forth from her fragrant chamber like a goddess	<i>Frontispiece</i>
	<i>facing page</i>
... the Trojans drove their chariots down into the ditch that guarded the ships of the Greeks	68
... there they found his mother, beautiful Deidamia, in mourning raiment	85
The girls . . . screamed and ran this way and that along the beach .	144

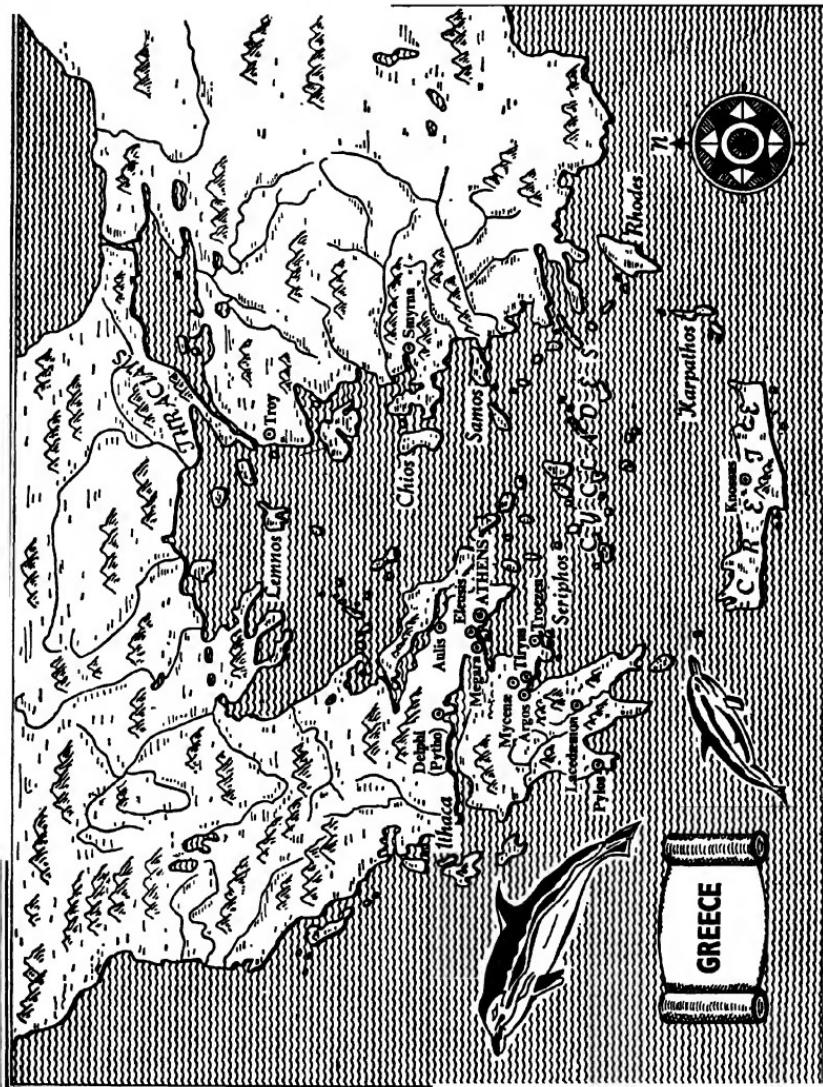
BLACK AND WHITE

The boar was too quick for him	<i>page</i>
	<i>page</i>
The king and queen sat on high thrones between the four pillars	3
Odysseus built a chamber for Penelope and himself	7
Odysseus pretended to be mad, and went ploughing the sea sand	12
Protesilaus was struck to the heart by an arrow	21
The battle raged till nightfall	26
Many an empty chariot did the horses hurry madly through the field	33
Andromache . . . weaving a purple web and embroidering flowers on it	41
Priam drove through the night to the hut of Achilles	55
The light from her torch fell on the glittering phial	56
The coming of the Amazons	59
Priam gave him a great cup of gold, full of wine	69
Sitting all in order on the benches, they smote the grey sea into foam	74
Philoctetes had shot an arrow at a great water dragon	81
	89

	<i>page</i>
The Greeks made an assault against the Trojan walls	95
'I ask the life of Helen of the fair hands'	102
Before Agamemnon died he saw Clytemnestra herself stab Cassandra	107
The biggest and strongest ram Odysseus seized, and held on	114
Odysseus sat down with his sword in his hand	121
Out from the hole in the cliff sprang the six heads of Scylla	125
At noonday the Old Man came out with his seals	135
'Wherefore, I pray thee, Hermes of the golden wand, hast thou come hither?'	136
He seized a plank and sat astride it	141
When Odysseus awoke he found himself alone	152
Antinous caught up a footstool and struck him	161
He caught her throat with his hand	166
The slaying of the wooers	171
He sat down on his own high seat beside the fire	175
Laertes was amazed at seeing a warrior all in mail come into his garden	177

PART I

ODYSSEUS, THE SACKER OF CITIES





I

THE BOYHOOD AND PARENTS OF ODYSSEUS

LONG AGO, in a little island called Ithaca on the west coast of Greece, there lived a king named Laertes. His kingdom was small and mountainous. People used to say that Ithaca 'lay like a shield upon the sea', which sounds as if it were a flat country. But in those times shields were very large and rose at the middle into two peaks with a hollow between them, so that Ithaca, seen far off in the sea, with her two chief mountain peaks and a cloven valley between them, looked exactly like a shield. The country was so rough that men kept no horses, for at that time people drove standing up in little light chariots with two horses; they never rode, and there was no cavalry in battle: men fought from chariots. When Odysseus, the son of Laertes, King of Ithaca, grew up, he never fought from a chariot, for he had none, but always on foot.

If there were no horses in Ithaca, there was plenty of cattle. The father of Odysseus had flocks of sheep and herds of swine, and wild goats, deer and hares lived in the hills and on the plains. The sea was full of fish of many sorts, which men caught with nets, and with rod and line and hook.

Thus Ithaca was a good island to live in. The summer was long and there was hardly any winter; only a few cold weeks, and then the swallows came back, and the plains were like a garden, all covered with wild flowers—violets, lilies, narcissus and roses. With the blue sky and the blue sea the island was beautiful. White temples stood on the shores, and the Nymphs, a sort of fairies, had their little shrines built of stone, with wild rose-bushes hanging over them.

Other islands lay within sight, crowned with mountains, stretching away, one behind the other, into the sunset. Odysseus in the course of his life saw many rich countries and great cities of men, but wherever he was his heart was always in the little isle of Ithaca, where he had learned how to row, and how to sail a boat, and how to shoot with bow and arrow, and to hunt boars and stags, and manage his hounds.

The mother of Odysseus was called Anticleia: she was the daughter of King Autolycus, who lived near Parnassus, a mountain on the mainland. This King Autolycus was the most cunning of men. He was a master thief, and could steal a man's pillow from under his head, but he does not seem to have been thought worse of for this. The Greeks had a God of Thieves named Hermes whom Autolycus worshipped, and people thought more good of his cunning tricks than harm of his dishonesty. Perhaps these tricks of his were only practised for amusement; however that may be, Odysseus became as artful as his grandfather; he was both the bravest and the most cunning of men, but Odysseus never stole things, except once, as we shall hear, from

the enemy in time of war. He showed his cunning in stratagems of war, and in many strange escapes from giants and man-eaters.

Soon after Odysseus was born, his grandfather came to see his mother and father in Ithaca. He was sitting at supper when the nurse of Odysseus, whose name was Eurykleia, brought in the baby and set him on the knees of Autolycus, saying : 'Find a name for your grandson, for he is a child of many prayers.'

'I am very angry with many men and women in the world,' said Autolycus, 'so let the child's name be "a man of wrath";' which in Greek was Odysseus. So the child was called Odysseus by his own people, but the name was changed into Ulysses by the Romans, and some people still know him best by this name.

We do not know much about Odysseus when he was a little boy, except that he used to run about the garden with his father, asking questions, and begging that he might have fruit trees 'for his very own'. He was a great pet, for his parents had no other son, so his father gave him thirteen pear trees and forty fig trees, and promised him fifty rows of vines all covered with grapes, which he could eat when he liked, without asking leave of the gardener. So he was not tempted to steal fruit like his grandfather.

When Autolycus gave Odysseus his name, he said that he must come to stay with him when he was a big boy, and he would get splendid presents. Odysseus was told about this, so when he was a tall lad he crossed the sea and drove in his chariot to the old man's house on Mount Parnassus. Everybody welcomed him, and next day his uncles and cousins and he went out to hunt a fierce wild boar, early in the morning. Probably Odysseus took his own dog, named Argos, the best of hounds, of which we shall hear again long afterwards, for the dog lived to be very old. Soon the hounds came on the scent of a wild boar, and after them the men went with spears in their hands, and Odysseus ran foremost, for he was already the swiftest runner in Greece.

He came on a great boar lying in a tangled thicket of boughs and bracken, a dark place where the sun never shone nor could the rain pierce through. Then the noise of the men's shouts and the barking of the dogs awakened the boar, and up he sprang, bristling all over his back and with fire shining from his eyes. In rushed Odysseus first of all, with his spear raised to strike, but the boar was too quick for him, and ran in, and drove his sharp tusk sideways, ripping up the thigh of Odysseus. But the boar's tusk missed the bone, and Odysseus sent his sharp spear into the beast's right shoulder, and the spear went clean through, and the boar fell dead with a loud cry. The uncles of Odysseus bound up his wound carefully and sang a magical song over it, as the French soldiers wanted to do to Joan of Arc when the arrow pierced her shoulder at the siege of Orleans. Then the blood ceased to flow, and soon Odysseus was quite healed of his wound. They thought that he would be a good warrior and gave him splendid presents, and when he went home again he told all that had happened to his father and mother, and his nurse, Eurycleia. But there was always a long white mark or scar above his left knee, and about that scar we shall hear again, many years afterwards.



II

HOW PEOPLE LIVED IN THE TIME OF ODYSSEUS

WHEN Odysseus was a young man he wished to marry a princess of his own rank. Now there were at that time many kings in Greece, and you must be told how they lived. Each king had his own little kingdom with his chief town, walled with huge walls of enormous stone. Many of these walls are still standing, though the grass has grown over the ruins of most of them, and in later years men believed that those walls must have been built by giants, the stones are so enormous. Each king had nobles under him, rich men, and all had their palaces, each with its courtyard and its long hall, where the fire burned in the midst and the king and queen sat beside it on high thrones, between the four chief carved pillars that held up the roof. The

thrones were made of cedar wood and ivory, inlaid with gold, and there were many other chairs and small tables for guests, and the walls and doors were covered with bronze plates, and gold and silver, and sheets of blue glass. Sometimes they were painted with pictures of bull hunts, and a few of these pictures may still be seen. At night torches were lit and placed in the hands of golden figures of boys, but all the smoke of fire and torches escaped by a hole in the roof, and made the ceiling black. On the walls hung swords and spears and helmets and shields, which needed to be often cleaned from the stains of the smoke. The minstrel or poet sat beside the king and queen, and after supper he struck his harp, and sang stories of old wars. At night the king and queen slept in their own place, and the women in their own rooms; the princesses had their chambers upstairs, and the young princes had each his room built separate in the courtyard.

There were bathrooms with polished baths, where guests were taken when they arrived dirty from a journey. The guests lay at night on beds in the portico, for the climate was warm. There were plenty of servants, who were usually slaves taken in war, but they were very kindly treated, and were friendly with their masters. No coined money was used; people paid for things in cattle, or in weighed pieces of gold. Rich men had plenty of gold cups and gold-hilted swords and bracelets and brooches. The kings were the leaders in war and judges in peace, and did sacrifices to the gods, killing cattle and swine and sheep, on which they afterwards dined.

They dressed in a simple way, in a long smock of linen or silk, which fell almost to the feet, but was tucked up into a belt round the waist and worn longer or shorter, as they happened to choose. Where it needed fastening at the throat, golden brooches were used, beautifully made, with safety-pins. This garment was much like the plaid that the highlanders used to wear, with its belt and

brooches. Over it the Greeks wore great cloaks of woollen cloth when the weather was cold, but these they did not use in battle. They fastened their breastplates, in war, over their smocks and had other armour covering the lower parts of the body, and leg armour called ‘greaves’; while the great shield which guarded the whole body from throat to ankles was carried by a broad belt slung round the neck. The sword was worn in another belt, crossing the shield belt. They had light shoes in peace and higher and heavier boots in war, or for walking across country.

The women wore the smock, with more brooches and jewels than the men, and had head coverings, with veils and mantles over all, and necklaces of gold and amber, earrings, and bracelets of gold or of bronze. The colours of their dresses were various, chiefly white and purple; and when in mourning they wore very dark blue, not black. All the armour and the sword blades and spear-heads were made, not of steel or iron, but of bronze, a mixture of copper and tin. The shields were made of several thicknesses of leather with a plating of bronze above; tools, such as axes and ploughshares, were either of iron or bronze; and so were the blades of knives and daggers.

To us the houses and way of living would have seemed very splendid, and also in some ways rather rough. The palace floors, at least in the house of Odysseus, were littered with bones and feet of the oxen slain for food, but this happened when Odysseus had been long from home. The floor of the hall in the house of Odysseus was not boarded with planks, or paved with stone: it was made of clay; for he was a poor king of small islands. The cooking was coarse: a pig or sheep was killed, roasted and eaten immediately. We never hear of boiling meat, and though people probably ate fish, we do not hear of their doing so except when no meat could be procured. Still, some people must have liked them; for in the pictures that were painted or cut in precious

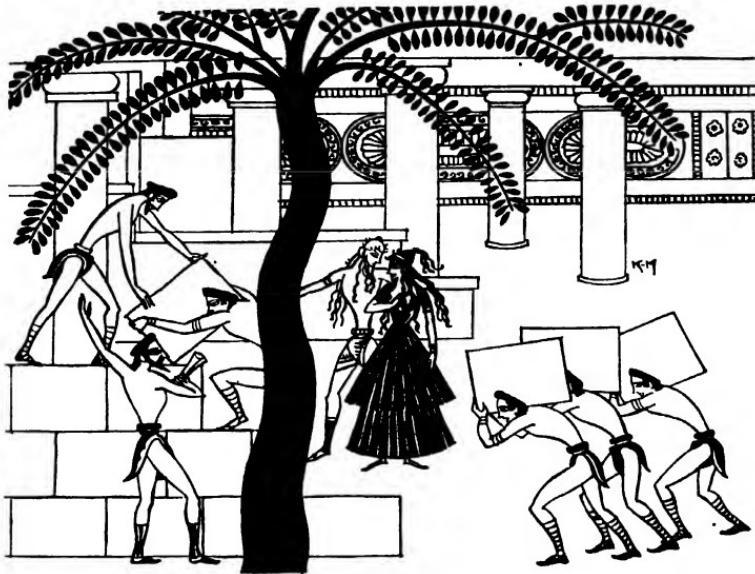
stones in these times we see the half-naked fishermen walking home, carrying large fish.

The people were wonderful workers of gold and bronze. Hundreds of their golden jewels have been found in their graves, but probably these were made and buried two or three centuries before the time of Odysseus. The dagger blades had pictures of fights with lions and of flowers inlaid on them, in gold of various colours, and in silver; nothing so beautiful is made now. There are figures of men hunting bulls on some of the gold cups, and these are wonderfully lifelike. The vases and pots of earthenware were painted in charming patterns: in short, it was a splendid world to live in.

The people believed in many gods, male and female, under the chief god, Zeus. The gods were thought to be taller than men and immortal, and to live in much the same way as men did, eating, drinking and sleeping in glorious palaces. Though they were supposed to reward good men and to punish people who broke their oaths and were unkind to strangers, there were many stories told in which the gods were fickle, cruel, selfish and set very bad examples to men. How far these stories were believed is not sure; it is certain that 'all men felt a need of the gods', and thought that they were pleased by good actions and displeased by evil. Yet when a man felt that his behaviour had been bad, he often threw the blame on the gods and said that they had misled him, which really meant no more than that 'he could not help it'.

There was a curious custom by which the princes bought wives from the fathers of the princesses, giving cattle and gold and bronze and iron, but sometimes a prince got a wife as the reward for some very brave action. A man would not give his daughter to a wooer whom she did not love, even if he offered the highest price; at least this must have been the general rule, for husbands and wives were very fond of each other and of their children, and

husbands always allowed their wives to rule the house and give their advice on everything. It was thought a very wicked thing for a woman to like another man better than her husband, and there were few such wives, but among them was the most beautiful woman who ever lived.



III

THE WOOING OF HELEN OF THE FAIR HANDS

THIS was the way in which people lived when Odysseus was young and wished to be married. The worst thing in the way of life was that the greatest and most beautiful princesses might be taken prisoners and carried off as slaves to the towns of the men who had killed their fathers and husbands. Now at that time one lady was far the fairest in the world, namely Helen, daughter of King Tyndarus. Every young prince heard of her and desired to marry her; so her father invited them all to his palace, and entertained them, and found out what they would give. Among the rest Odysseus went, but his father had a little

kingdom, a rough island with others near it, and Odysseus had not a good chance. He was not tall; though very strong and active, he was a short man with broad shoulders, but his face was handsome, and like all the princes he wore long yellow hair, clustering like a hyacinth flower. His manner was rather hesitating and he seemed to speak very slowly at first, though afterwards his words came freely. He was good at everything a man can do; he could plough and build houses and make ships and he was the best archer in Greece, except one, and could bend the great bow of a dead king, Eurytus, which no other man could string. But he had no horses and had no great train of followers; and in short neither Helen nor her father thought of choosing Odysseus for her husband out of so many tall, handsome young princes, glittering with gold ornaments. Still, Helen was very kind to Odysseus, and there was great friendship between them, which was fortunate for her in the end.

Tyndarus first made all the princes take an oath that they would stand by the prince whom he chose and would fight for him in all his quarrels. Then he named for her husband Menelaus, King of Lacedaemon. He was a very brave man, but not one of the strongest; he was not such a fighter as the gigantic Aias, the tallest and strongest of men; or as Diomede, the friend of Odysseus; or as his own brother, Agamemnon, the king of the rich city of Mycenae, who was chief over all other princes and general of the whole army in war. The great lions carved in stone that seemed to guard his city are still standing above the gate through which Agamemnon used to drive his chariot.

The man who proved to be the best fighter of all, Achilles, was not among the lovers of Helen, for he was still a boy, and his mother, Thetis of the silver feet, a goddess of the sea, had sent him to be brought up as a girl, among the daughters of Lycomedes of Scyros in an island far away. Thetis did this because

Achilles was her only child, and there was a prophecy that if he went to the wars he would win the greatest glory, but die very young and never see his mother again. She thought that if war broke out he would not be found hiding in girl's dress, among girls far away.

So at last, after thinking over the matter for long, Tyndarus gave fair Helen to Menelaus, the rich King of Lacedaemon; and her twin sister Clytaemnestra, who was also very beautiful, was given to King Agamemnon, the chief over all the princes. They all lived very happily together at first, but not for long.

In the meantime King Tyndarus spoke to his brother Icarius, who had a daughter named Penelope. She also was very pretty, but not nearly so beautiful as her cousin, fair Helen, and we know that Penelope was not very fond of her cousin. Icarius, admiring the strength and wisdom of Odysseus, gave him his daughter Penelope to be his wife, and Odysseus loved her very dearly; no man and wife were ever dearer to each other. They went away together to rocky Ithaca, and perhaps Penelope was not sorry that a wide sea lay between her home and that of Helen; for Helen was not only the fairest woman that ever lived in the world, but she was so kind and gracious and charming that no man could see her without loving her. When she was only a child the famous prince Theseus carried her away to his own city of Athens, meaning to marry her when she grew up, and even at that time there was a war for her sake, for her brothers followed Theseus with an army, and fought him, and brought her home.

She had fairy gifts: for instance, she had a great red jewel called 'the star', and when she wore it red drops seemed to fall from it and vanished before they touched and stained her white breast—so white that people called her 'the daughter of the swan'. She could speak in the very voice of any man or woman, so folk also named her Echo, and it was believed that she could

neither grow old nor die, but would at last pass away to the Elysian plain and the world's end, where life is easiest for men. No snow comes thither, nor great storm, nor any rain; but always the river of Ocean that rings round the whole earth sends forth the west wind to blow cool on the people of King Rhadamanthus of the fair hair. These were some of the stories that men told of fair Helen, but Odysseus was never sorry that he had not the fortune to marry her, so fond he was of her cousin, his wife Penelope, who was very wise and good.

When Odysseus brought his wife home they lived, as the custom was, in the palace of his father, King Laertes, but Odysseus, with his own hands, built a chamber for Penelope and himself. There grew a great olive tree in the inner court of the palace, and its stem was as large as one of the tall carved pillars of the hall. Round about this tree Odysseus built the chamber and finished it with close-set stones and roofed it over and made close-fastening doors. Then he cut off all the branches of the olive tree, and smoothed the trunk, and shaped it into the bed-post, and made the bedstead beautiful with inlaid work of gold and silver and ivory. There was no such bed in Greece, and no man could move it from its place; and this bed comes again into the story at the very end.

Now time went by and Odysseus and Penelope had one son called Telemachus; and Eurycleia, who had been his father's nurse, took care of him. They were all very happy and lived in peace in rocky Ithaca, and Odysseus looked after his lands and flocks and herds, and went hunting with his dog Argos, the swiftest of hounds.

IV

THE STEALING OF HELEN

HIS happy time did not last long, and Telemachus was still a baby when war arose so great and mighty and marvellous as had never been known in the world. Far across the sea that lies on the east of Greece there dwelt the rich King Priam. His town was called Troy, or Ilios, and it stood on a hill near the seashore, where are the straits of Hellespont, between Europe and Asia; it was a great city surrounded by strong walls, and its ruins are still standing. The kings could make merchants who passed through the straits pay toll to them, and they had allies in Thrace, a part of Europe opposite Troy, and Priam was chief of all princes on his side of the sea as Agamemnon was chief king in Greece. Priam had many beautiful things; he had a vine made of gold, with golden leaves and clusters, and he had the swiftest horses, and many strong and brave sons; the strongest and bravest was named Hector, and the youngest and most beautiful was named Paris.

There was a prophecy that Priam's wife would give birth to a burning torch, so when Paris was born Priam sent a servant to carry the baby into a wild wood on Mount Ida and leave him to die or be eaten by wolves and wild cats. The servant left the child, but a shepherd found him, and brought him up as his own son. The boy became as beautiful for a boy as Helen was for a girl, and was the best runner and hunter and archer among the country people. He was loved by the beautiful Oenone, a nymph—that is, a kind of fairy—who dwelt in a cave among the woods of Ida.

The Greeks and Trojans believed in these days that such fair nymphs haunted all beautiful woodland places, and the mountains and wells, and had crystal palaces, like mermaids, beneath the waves of the sea. These fairies were not mischievous, but gentle and kind. Sometimes they married mortal men, and Oenone was the bride of Paris and hoped to keep him for her own all the days of his life.

It was believed that she had the magical power of healing wounded men, however sorely they were hurt. Paris and Oenone lived most happily together in the forest; but one day, when the servants of Priam had driven off a beautiful bull that was in the herd of Paris, he left the hills to seek it, and came into the town of Troy. His mother, Hecuba, saw him, and looking at him closely perceived that he wore a ring which she had tied round her baby's neck when he was taken away from her soon after his birth. Then Hecuba, beholding him so beautiful and knowing him to be her son, wept for joy, and they all forgot the prophecy that he would be a burning torch of fire, and Priam gave him a house like those of his brothers, the Trojan princes.

The fame of beautiful Helen reached Troy, and Paris quite forgot unhappy Oenone, and must needs go to see Helen for himself. Perhaps he meant to try to win her for his wife, before her marriage. But sailing was little understood in these times and the water was wide and men were often driven for years out of their course, to Egypt and Africa, and far away into the unknown seas, where fairies lived in enchanted islands and cannibals dwelt in caves of the hills.

Paris came much too late to have a chance of marrying Helen; however, he was determined to see her, and he made his way to her palace beneath the mountain Taygetus, beside the clear swift river Eurotas. The servants came out of the hall when they heard the sound of wheels and horses' feet, and some of them took the

horses to the stables and tilted the chariots against the gateway, while others led Paris into the hall, which shone like the sun with gold and silver. Then Paris and his companions were led to the baths, where they were bathed, and clad in new clothes, mantles of white and robes of purple, and next they were brought before King Menelaus, and he welcomed them kindly, and meat was set before them, and wine in cups of gold. While they were talking Helen came forth from her fragrant chamber like a goddess, her maidens following her, and carrying for her an ivory distaff with violet-coloured wool, which she span as she sat, and heard Paris tell how far he had travelled to see her who was so famous for her beauty even in countries far away.

Then Paris knew that he had never seen, and never could see, a lady so lovely and gracious as Helen as she sat and span, while the red drops fell and vanished from the ruby called the star ; and Helen knew that among all the princes in the world there was none so beautiful as Paris. Now some say that Paris, by art magic, put on the appearance of Menelaus and asked Helen to come sailing with him, and that she, thinking he was her husband, followed him, and he carried her across the wide water to Troy, away from her lord and her one beautiful little daughter, the child Hermione. And others say that the gods carried Helen herself off to Egypt, and that they made in her likeness a beautiful ghost, out of flowers and sunset clouds, whom Paris bore to Troy, and this they did to cause war between Greeks and Trojans. Another story is that Helen and her bower maiden and her jewels were seized by force, when Menelaus was out hunting. It is only certain that Paris and Helen did cross the seas together and that Menelaus and little Hermione were left alone in the melancholy palace beside the Eurotas. Penelope, we know for certain, made no excuses for her beautiful cousin, but hated her as the cause of her own sorrows and of the deaths of thousands of men in war,

for all the Greek princes were bound by their oath to fight for Menelaus against anyone who injured him and stole his wife away. But Helen was very unhappy in Troy, and blamed herself as bitterly as all the other women blamed her, and most of all Oenone, who had been the love of Paris. The men were much more kind to Helen and were determined to fight to the death rather than lose the sight of her beauty among them.

The news of the dishonour done to Menelaus and to all the princes of Greece ran through the country like fire through a forest. East and west and south and north went the news: to kings in their castles on the hills and beside the rivers and on cliffs above the sea. The cry came to ancient Nestor of the white beard at Pylos, Nestor who had reigned over two generations of men, who had fought against the wild folk of the hills and remembered the strong Heracles, and Eurytus of the black bow that sang before the day of battle.

The cry came to black-bearded Agamemnon, in his strong town called 'golden Mycenae', because it was so rich; it came to the people in Thisbe, where the wild doves haunt; and it came to rocky Pytho, where is the sacred temple of Apollo and the maid who prophesies. It came to Aias son of Telamon, the tallest and strongest of men, in his little isle of Salamis; and to Diomede of the loud war-cry, the bravest of warriors, who held Argos and Tiryns of the black walls of huge stones that are still standing. The summons came to the western islands and to Odysseus in Ithaca, and even far south to the great island of Crete of the hundred cities, where Idomeneus ruled in Knossos—Idomeneus, whose ruined palace may still be seen, with the throne of the king and pictures painted on the walls and the king's own draught-board of gold and silver and hundreds of tablets of clay, on which are written the lists of royal treasures. Far north went the news to Pelasgian Argos and Hellas, where the people of Peleus

dwelt—the Myrmidons; but Peleus was too old to fight, and his boy, Achilles, dwelt far away, in the island of Scyros, dressed as a girl, among the daughters of King Lycomedes. To many another town and to a hundred islands went the bitter news of approaching war, for all princes knew that their honour and their oaths compelled them to gather their spearmen and bowmen and slingers from the fields and the fishing, and to make ready their ships, and meet King Agamemnon in the harbour of Aulis, and cross the wide sea to besiege Troy town.

Now the story is told that Odysseus was very unwilling to leave his island and his wife Penelope and little Telemachus, while Penelope had no wish that he should pass into danger and into the sight of Helen of the fair hands. So it is said that when two of the princes came to summon Odysseus, he pretended to be mad and went ploughing the sea sand with oxen, and sowing the sand with salt. Then the prince Palamedes took the baby Telemachus from the arms of his nurse, Eurycleia, and laid him in the line of the furrow, where the ploughshare would strike him and kill him. But Odysseus turned the plough aside, and they cried that he was not mad, but sane, and he must keep his oath and join the fleet at Aulis, a long voyage for him to sail, round the stormy southern Cape of Maleia.

Whether this tale be true or not, Odysseus did go, leading twelve black ships, with high beaks painted red at prow and stern. The ships had oars, and the warriors manned the oars, to row when there was no wind. There was a small raised deck at each end of the ships; on these decks men stood to fight with sword and spear when there was a battle at sea. Each ship had but one mast, with a broad lugger sail, and for anchors they had only heavy stones attached to cables. They generally landed at night and slept on the shore of one of the many islands when they could, for they greatly feared to sail out of sight of land.



The fleet consisted of more than a thousand ships, each with fifty warriors; so the army was of more than fifty thousand men. Agamemnon had a hundred ships, Diomede had eighty, Nestor had ninety, the Cretans with Idomeneus had eighty, Menelaus had sixty; but Aias and Odysseus, who lived in small islands, had only twelve ships apiece. Yet Aias was so brave and strong and Odysseus so brave and wise that they were ranked among the greatest chiefs and advisers of Agamemnon, with Menelaus, Diomede, Idomeneus, Nestor, Menestheus of Athens and two or three others. These chiefs were called the Council and gave advice to Agamemnon, who was commander-in-chief. He was a brave fighter, but so anxious and fearful of losing the lives of his soldiers that Odysseus and Diomede were often obliged to speak to him very severely. Agamemnon was also very insolent and greedy, though when anybody stood up to him he was ready to apologize, for fear the injured chief should renounce his service and take away his soldiers.

Nestor was much respected because he remained brave, though he was too old to be very useful in battle. He generally tried to make peace when the princes quarrelled with Agamemnon. He loved to tell long stories about his great deeds when he was young, and he wished the chiefs to fight in old-fashioned ways.

For instance, in his time the Greeks had fought in clan regiments and the princely men had never dismounted in battle, but had fought in squadrons of chariots; but now the owners of chariots fought on foot, each man for himself, while his squire kept the chariot near him to escape on if he had to retreat. Nestor wished to go back to the good old way of chariot charges against the crowds of foot soldiers of the enemy. In short, he was a fine example of the old-fashioned soldier.

Aias, though so very tall, strong and brave, was rather stupid. He seldom spoke, but he was always ready to fight, and the last to retreat. Menelaus was weak of body, but as brave as the best, or braver, for he had a keen sense of honour, and would attempt what he had not the strength to do. Diomede and Odysseus were great friends, and always fought side by side, when they could, and helped each other in the most dangerous adventures.

These were the chiefs who led the great Greek Armada from the harbour of Aulis. A long time had passed after the flight of Helen, before the large fleet could be collected, and more time went by in the attempt to cross the sea to Troy. There were tempests that scattered the ships, so they were driven back to Aulis to refit; and they fought, as they went out again, with the peoples of unfriendly islands, and besieged their towns. What they wanted most of all was to have Achilles with them, for he was the leader of fifty ships and 2,500 men, and he had magical armour made, men said, for his father, by Hephaestus, the God of armour-making and smithy work.

At last the fleet came to the Isle of Scyros, where they suspected

that Achilles was concealed. King Lycomedes received the chiefs kindly, and they saw all his beautiful daughters dancing and playing at ball, but Achilles was still so young and slim and so beautiful that they did not know him among the others. There was a prophecy that they could not take Troy without him, and yet they could not find him out. Then Odysseus had a plan. He blackened his eyebrows and beard and put on the dress of a Phoenician merchant. The Phoenicians were a people who lived near the Jews and were of the same race and spoke much the same language, but unlike the Jews, who at that time were farmers in Palestine, tilling the ground and keeping flocks and herds, the Phoenicians were the greatest of traders and sailors and stealers of slaves. They carried cargoes of beautiful cloths and embroideries, and jewels of gold, and necklaces of amber, and sold these everywhere about the shores of Greece and the islands.

Odysseus then dressed himself like a Phoenician pedlar with his pack on his back: he only took a stick in his hand, his long hair was turned up and hidden under a red sailor's cap, and in this figure he came, stooping beneath his pack, into the courtyard of King Lycomedes. The girls heard that a pedlar had come, and out they all ran, Achilles with the rest, to watch the pedlar undo his pack. Each chose what she liked best: one took a wreath of gold; another a necklace of gold and amber; another earrings; a fourth a set of brooches; another a dress of embroidered scarlet cloth; another a veil; another a pair of bracelets; but at the bottom of the pack lay a great sword of bronze, the hilt studded with golden nails. Achilles seized the sword. 'This is for me!' he said, and drew the sword from the gilded sheath and made it whistle round his head.

'You are Achilles, Peleus' son,' said Odysseus, 'and you are to be the chief warrior of the Achaeans,' for the Greeks then called themselves Achaeans. Achilles was only too glad to hear

these words, for he was quite tired of living among maidens. Odysseus led him into the hall where the chiefs were sitting at their wine, and Achilles was blushing like any girl.

'Here is the Queen of the Amazons,' said Odysseus—for the Amazons were a race of warlike maidens—or rather here is Achilles, Peleus' son, with sword in hand.' Then they all took his hand and welcomed him, and he was clothed in man's dress with the sword by his side, and presently they sent him back with ten ships to his home. There his mother, Thetis of the silver feet, the goddess of the sea, wept over him, saying: 'My child, thou hast the choice of a long and happy and peaceful life here with me, or of a brief time of war and undying renown. Never shall I see thee again in Argos if thy choice is for war.' But Achilles chose to die young and to be famous as long as the world stands. So his father gave him fifty ships, with Patroclus, who was older than he, to be his friend, and with an old man, Phoenix, to advise him; and his mother gave him the glorious armour that the god had made for his father, and the heavy ashen spear that none but he could wield, and he sailed to join the host of the Achaeans, who all praised and thanked Odysseus that had found for them such a prince. For Achilles was the fiercest fighter of them all, and the swiftest-footed man, and the most courteous prince, and the gentlest with women and children; but he was proud and high of heart, and when he was angered his anger was terrible.

The Trojans would have had no chance against the Greeks if only the men of the city of Troy had fought to keep Helen of the fair hands. But they had allies, who spoke different languages and came to fight for them, both from Europe and from Asia. On the Trojan as well as on the Greek side were people called Pelasgians, who seem to have lived on both shores of the sea. There were Thracians too, who dwelt much farther north in Europe than Achilles, and beside the strait of Hellespont, where the narrow sea runs like

a river. There were warriors of Lycia, led by Sarpedon and Glaucus; there were Carians, who spoke in a strange tongue; there were Mysians and men from Alybe, which was called 'the birthplace of silver', and many other peoples sent their armies, so that the war was between Eastern Europe, on one side, and Western Asia Minor on the other. The people of Egypt took no part in the war: the Greeks and Islesmen used to come down in their ships and attack the Epyptians as the Danes used to invade England. You may see the warriors from the islands, with their horned helmets, in old Egyptian pictures.

The commander-in-chief, as we say now, of the Trojans was Hector, the son of Priam. He was thought a match for any one of the Greeks, and was brave and good. His brothers also were leaders, but Paris preferred to fight from a distance with bow and arrows. He and Pandarus, who dwelt on the slopes of Mount Ida, were the best archers in the Trojan army. The princes usually fought with heavy spears, which they threw at each other, and with swords, leaving archery to the common soldiers who had no armour of bronze. But Teucer, Meriones and Odysseus were the best archers of the Achaeans. People called Dardanians were led by Aeneas, who was said to be the son of the most beautiful of the goddesses. These, with Sarpedon and Glaucus, were the most famous of the men who fought for Troy.

Troy was a strong town on a hill: Mount Ida lay behind it, and in front was a plain sloping to the seashore. Through this plain ran two beautiful clear rivers, and there were scattered here and there what you would have taken for steep knolls, but they were really mounds piled up over the ashes of warriors who had died long ago. On these mounds sentinels used to stand and look across the water to give warning if the Greek fleet drew near, for the Trojans had heard that it was on its way. At last the fleet came in view, and the sea was black with ships, the oarsmen pulling

with all their might for the honour of being the first to land. The race was won by the ship of the prince Protesilaus, who was first of all to leap on shore, but as he leaped he was struck to the heart

by an arrow from the bow of Paris. This must have seemed a good omen to the Trojans and to the Greeks evil, but we do not hear that the landing was resisted in great force, any more than that of Norman William was, when he invaded England.



The Greeks drew up all their ships on shore, and the men camped in huts built in front of the ships. There was thus a long row of huts with the ships behind them, and in these huts

the Greeks lived all through the ten years that the siege of Troy lasted. In these days they do not seem to have understood how to conduct a siege. You would have expected the Greeks to build towers and dig trenches all round Troy, and from the towers watch the roads, so that provisions might not be brought in from the country. This is called investing a town, but the Greeks never invested Troy. Perhaps they had not men enough; at all events the place remained open, and cattle could always be driven in to feed the warriors and the women and children.

Moreover the Greeks for long never seem to have tried to break down one of the gates nor to scale the walls, which were very high, with ladders. On the other hand, the Trojans and allies never ventured to drive the Greeks into the sea; they commonly remained within the walls or skirmished just beneath them. The

older men insisted on this way of fighting in spite of Hector, who always wished to attack and storm the camp of the Greeks. Neither side had machines for throwing heavy stones, such as the Romans used later, and the most that the Greeks did was to follow Achilles and capture small neighbouring cities, and take the women for slaves, and drive the cattle. They got provisions and wine from the Phoenicians, who came in ships, and made much profit out of the war.

It was not till the tenth year that the war began in real earnest, and scarcely any of the chief leaders had fallen. Fever came upon the Greeks, and all day the camp was black with smoke and all night shone with fire from the great piles of burning wood on which the Greeks burned their dead, whose bones they then buried under hillocks of earth. Many of these hillocks are still standing on the plain of Troy. When the plague had raged for ten days Achilles called an assembly of the whole army to try to find out why the gods were angry. They thought that the beautiful god Apollo (who took the Trojan side) was shooting invisible arrows at them from his silver bow, though fevers in armies are usually caused by dirt and drinking bad water. The great heat of the sun, too, may have helped to cause the disease; but we must tell the story as the Greeks told it themselves. So Achilles spoke in the assembly, and proposed to ask some prophet why Apollo was angry. The chief prophet was Calchas. He rose and said that he would declare the truth if Achilles would promise to protect him from the anger of any prince whom the truth might offend.

Achilles knew well whom Calchas meant. Ten days before a priest of Apollo had come to the camp and offered ransom for his daughter Chryseis, a beautiful girl, whom Achilles had taken prisoner with many others when he captured a small town. Chryseis had been given as a slave to Agamemnon, who always

got the best of the plunder because he was chief king, whether he had taken part in the fighting or not. As a rule he did not. To Achilles had been given another girl, Briseis, of whom he was very fond. Now when Achilles had promised to protect Calchas, the prophet spoke out and boldly said, what all men knew already, that Apollo caused the plague because Agamemnon would not return Chryseis and had insulted her father, the priest of the god.

On hearing this Agamemnon was very angry. He said that he would send Chryseis home, but that he would take Briseis away from Achilles. Then Achilles was drawing his great sword from the sheath to kill Agamemnon, but even in his anger he knew that this was wrong, so he merely called Agamemnon a greedy coward 'with face of dog and heart of deer', and he swore that he and his men would fight no more against the Trojans. Old Nestor tried to make peace and swords were not drawn, but Briseis was taken away from Achilles, and Odysseus put Chryseis on board of his ship and sailed away with her to her father's town and gave her up to her father. Then her father prayed to Apollo that the plague might cease, and it did cease—when the Greeks had cleansed their camp and purified themselves and cast their filth into the sea.

We know how fierce and brave Achilles was, and we may wonder that he did not challenge Agamemnon to fight a duel. But the Greeks never fought duels, and Agamemnon was believed to be chief king by right divine. Achilles went alone to the seashore when his dear Briseis was led away, and he wept and called to his mother, the silver-footed lady of the waters. Then she rose from the grey sea like a mist and sat down beside her son and stroked his hair with her hand, and he told her all his sorrows. So she said that she would go up to the dwelling of the gods and pray Zeus, the chief of them all, to make the Trojans win a great battle, so

that Agamemnon should feel his need of Achilles, and make amends for his insolence, and do him honour.

Thetis kept her promise, and Zeus gave his word that the Trojans should defeat the Greeks. That night Zeus sent a deceitful dream to Agamemnon. The dream took the shape of old Nestor and said that Zeus would give him victory that day. While he was still asleep Agamemnon was full of hope that he would instantly take Troy, but when he woke he seems not to have been nearly so confident, for in place of putting on his armour and bidding the Greeks arm themselves, he merely dressed in his robe and mantle, took his sceptre, and went and told the chiefs about his dream. They did not feel much encouraged, so he said that he would try the temper of the army. He would call them together and propose to return to Greece; but if the soldiers took him at his word the other chiefs were to stop them. This was a foolish plan, for the soldiers were wearying for beautiful Greece, and their homes, and wives and children. Therefore, when Agamemnon did as he had said, the whole army rose like the sea under the west wind, and with a shout they rushed to the ships, while the dust blew in clouds from under their feet. Then they began to launch their ships, and it seems that the princes were carried away in the rush and were as eager as the rest to go home.

But Odysseus only stood in sorrow and anger beside his ship and never put hand to it, for he felt how disgraceful it was to run away. At last he threw down his mantle, which his herald Eurybates of Ithaca, a round-shouldered, brown, curly-haired man, picked up, and he ran to find Agamemnon, and took his sceptre, a gold-studded staff like a marshal's baton, and he gently told the chiefs whom he met that they were doing a shameful thing; but he drove the common soldiers back to the place of meeting with the sceptre. They all returned, puzzled and chattering, but one lame, bandy-legged, bald, round-shouldered, impudent fellow

named Thersites jumped up and made an insolent speech, insulting the princes and advising the army to run away. Then Odysseus took him and beat him till the blood came, and he sat down, wiping away his tears, and looking so foolish that the whole army laughed at him, and cheered Odysseus when he and Nestor bade them arm and fight. Agamemnon still believed a good deal in his dream and prayed that he might take Troy that very day and kill Hector. Thus Odysseus alone saved the army from a cowardly retreat; but for him the ships would have been launched in an hour. But the Greeks armed and advanced in full force, all except Achilles and his friend Patroclus with their two or three thousand men. The Trojans also took heart, knowing that Achilles would not fight, and the armies approached each other. Paris himself, with two spears and a bow and without armour, walked into the space between the hosts and challenged any Greek prince to single combat. Menelaus, whose wife Paris had carried away, was as glad as a hungry lion when he finds a stag or a goat, and leaped in armour from his chariot, but Paris turned and slunk away like a man when he meets a great serpent on a narrow path in the hills. Then Hector rebuked Paris for his cowardice, and Paris was ashamed and offered to end the war by fighting Menelaus. If he himself fell the Trojans must give up Helen and all her jewels; if Menelaus fell the Greeks were to return without fair Helen. The Greeks accepted this plan and both sides disarmed themselves to look on at the fight in comfort, and they meant to take the most solemn oaths to keep peace till the combat was lost and won and the quarrel settled. Hector sent into Troy for two lambs, which were to be sacrificed when the oaths were taken.

In the meantime Helen of the fair hands was at home working at a great purple tapestry on which she embroidered the battles of the Greeks and Trojans. It was just like the tapestry at Bayeux on

which Norman ladies embroidered the battles in the Norman Conquest of England. Helen was very fond of embroidering, like poor Mary Queen of Scots when a prisoner in Loch Leven Castle. Probably the work kept both Helen and Mary from thinking of their past lives and their sorrows.

When Helen heard that her husband was to fight Paris she wept and threw a shining veil over her head, and with her two bower maidens went to the roof of the gate tower, where King Priam was sitting with the old Trojan chiefs. They saw her and said that it was small blame to fight for so beautiful a lady, and Priam called her 'dear child', and said: 'I do not blame you, I blame the gods who brought about this war.' But Helen said that she wished she had died before she left her little daughter and her husband and her home: 'Alas! shameless me!' Then she told Priam the names of the chief Greek warriors, and of Odysseus, who was shorter by a head than Agamemnon, but broader in chest and shoulders. She wondered that she could not see her own two brothers, Castor and Polydeuces, and thought that they kept aloof in shame for her sin; but the green grass covered their graves, for they had both died in battle, far away in Lacedaemon, their own country.

Then the lambs were sacrificed, and the oaths were taken, and Paris put on his brother's armour—helmet, breastplate, shield and leg-armour. Lots were drawn to decide whether Paris or Menelaus should throw his spear first, and as Paris won he threw his spear, but the point was blunted against the shield of Menelaus. But when Menelaus threw his spear it went clean through the shield of Paris, and through the side of his breastplate, but only grazed his robe. Menelaus drew his sword and rushed in and smote at the crest of the helmet of Paris, but his bronze blade broke into four pieces. Menelaus caught Paris by the horsehair crest of his helmet, and dragged him towards the Greeks, but the

chin-strap broke, and Menelaus turning round threw the helmet into the ranks of the Greeks. But when Menelaus looked again for Paris, with a spear in his hand, he could see him nowhere! The Greeks believed that the beautiful goddess Aphrodite, whom the Romans called Venus, hid him in a thick cloud of darkness and carried him to his own house, where Helen of the fair hands found him and said to him: 'Would that thou hadst perished, conquered by that great warrior who was my lord! Go forth again and challenge him to fight thee face to face.' But Paris had no more desire to fight, and the goddess threatened Helen, and compelled her to remain with him in Troy, coward as he had proved himself. Yet on other days Paris fought well; it seems that he was afraid of Menelaus, because in his heart he was ashamed of himself.

Meanwhile Menelaus was seeking for Paris everywhere, and the Trojans, who hated him, would have shown his hiding-place. But they knew not where he was, and the Greeks claimed the victory, and thought that as Paris had the worst of the fight Helen would be restored to them and they would all sail home.



TROJAN VICTORIES

THE war might now have ended, but an evil and foolish thought came to Pandarus, a prince of Ida, who fought for the Trojans. He chose to shoot an arrow at Menelaus, contrary to the sworn vows of peace, and the arrow pierced the breastplate of Menelaus through the place where the clasped plates meet, and drew his blood. Then Agamemnon, who loved his brother dearly, began to lament, saying that if he died the army would all go home and Trojans would dance on the grave of Menelaus. 'Do not alarm all our army,' said Menelaus. 'The arrow has done me little harm.' And so it proved, for the surgeon easily drew the arrow out of the wound.

Then Agamemnon hastened here and there, bidding the

Greeks arm and attack the Trojans, who would certainly be defeated, for they had broken the oaths of peace. But with his usual insolence he chose to accuse Odysseus and Diomede of cowardice, though Diomede was as brave as any man and Odysseus had just prevented the whole army from launching their ships and going home. Odysseus answered him with spirit but Diomede said nothing at the moment; later he spoke his mind. He leaped from his chariot, and all the chiefs leaped down and advanced in line, the chariots following them, while the spearmen and bowmen followed the chariots. The Trojan army advanced, all shouting in their different languages, but the Greeks came on silently. Then the two front lines clashed, shield against shield, and the noise was like the roaring of many flooded torrents among the hills. When a man fell he who had slain him tried to strip off his armour, and his friends fought over his body to save the dead from this dishonour.

Odysseus fought above a wounded friend, and drove his spear through head and helmet of a Trojan prince, and everywhere men were falling beneath spears and arrows and heavy stones which the warriors threw. Here Menelaus speared the man who built the ships with which Paris had sailed to Greece; and the dust rose like a cloud, and a mist went up from the fighting men, while Diomede stormed across the plain like a river in flood, leaving dead bodies behind him as the river leaves boughs of trees and grass to mark its course. Pandarus wounded Diomede with an arrow, but Diomede slew him, and the Trojans were being driven in flight, when Sarpedon and Hector turned and hurled themselves on the Greeks; and even Diomede shuddered when Hector came on, and charged at Odysseus, who was slaying Trojans as he went, and the battle swayed this way and that, and the arrows fell like rain.

But Hector was sent into the city to bid the women pray to the goddess Athene for help, and he went to the house of Paris, whom

Helen was imploring to go and fight like a man, saying: 'Would that the winds had wafted me away, and the tides drowned me, shameless that I am, before these things came to pass!'

Then Hector went to see his dear wife, Andromache, whose father had been slain by Achilles early in the siege, and he found her and her nurse carrying her little boy, Hector's son, and like a star upon her bosom lay his beautiful and shining golden head. Now while Helen urged Paris to go into the fight, Andromache prayed Hector to stay with her in the town and fight no more lest he should be slain and leave her a widow and the boy an orphan, with none to protect him. The army, she said, should come back within the walls, where they had so long been safe, not fight in the open plain. But Hector answered that he would never shrink from battle: 'Yet I know this in my heart, the day shall come for holy Troy to be laid low, and Priam and the people of Priam. But this and my own death do not trouble me so much as the thought of you, when you shall be carried as a slave to Greece, to spin at another woman's bidding, and bear water from a Grecian well. May the heaped-up earth of my tomb cover me ere I hear thy cries and the tale of thy captivity.'

Then Hector stretched out his hands to his little boy, but the child was afraid when he saw the great glittering helmet of his father and the nodding horsehair crest. So Hector laid his helmet on the ground and dandled the child in his arms, and tried to comfort his wife, and said goodbye for the last time, for he never came back to Troy alive. He went on his way back to the battle, and Paris went with him, in glorious armour, and soon they were slaying the princes of the Greeks.

The battle raged till nightfall, and in the night the Greeks and Trojans burned their dead; and the Greeks made a trench and wall round their camp, which they needed for safety now that the Trojans came from their town and fought in the open plain.

Next day the Trojans were so successful that they did not retreat behind their walls at night, but lit great fires on the plain—a thousand fires, with fifty men taking supper round each of them, and drinking their wine to the music of flutes. But the Greeks were much discouraged, and Agamemnon called the whole army together, and proposed that they should launch their ships in the night and sail away home. Then Diomede stood up and said: ‘You called me a coward lately. You are the coward! Sail away if you are afraid to remain here, but all the rest of us will fight till we take Troy town.’

Then all shouted in praise of Diomede, and Nestor advised them to send five hundred young men, under his own son Thrasymedes, to watch the Trojans and guard the new wall and the ditch, in case the Trojans attacked them in the darkness. Next Nestor counselled Agamemnon to send Odysseus and Aias to Achilles and promise to give back Briseis and rich presents of gold, and beg pardon for his insolence. If Achilles would be friends again with Agamemnon, and fight as he used to fight, the Trojans would soon be driven back into the town.

Agamemnon was very ready to beg pardon, for he feared that the whole army would be defeated and cut off from their ships and killed or kept as slaves. So Odysseus and Aias and the old tutor of Achilles, Phoenix, went to Achilles and argued with him, praying him to accept the rich presents and help the Greeks. But Achilles answered that he did not believe a word that Agamemnon said; Agamemnon had always hated him and always would hate him. No; he would not cease to be angry, he would sail away next day with all his men, and he advised the rest to come with him. ‘Why be so fierce?’ said tall Aias, who seldom spoke. ‘Why make so much trouble about one girl? We offer you seven girls and plenty of other gifts.’

Then Achilles said that he would not sail away next day, but he

would not fight till the Trojans tried to burn his own ships, and there he thought that Hector would find work enough to do. This was the most that Achilles would promise, and all the Greeks were silent when Odysseus delivered his message. But Diomede arose and said that with or without Achilles fight they must; and all men, heavy at heart, went to sleep in their huts or in the open air at their doors.

Agamemnon was much too anxious to sleep. He saw the glow of the thousand fires of the Trojans in the dark and heard their merry flutes, and he groaned and pulled out his long hair by handfuls. When he was tired of crying and groaning and tearing his hair, he thought that he would go for advice to old Nestor. He threw a lion-skin, the coverlet of his bed, over his shoulder, took his spear, went out and met Menelaus—for he too could not sleep—and Menelaus proposed to send a spy among the Trojans, if any man were brave enough to go, for the Trojan camp was all alike with fires and the adventure was dangerous. Therefore the two wakened Nestor and the other chiefs, who came just as they were, wrapped in the fur coverlets of their beds, without any armour. First they visited the five hundred young men set to watch the wall, and then they crossed the ditch and sat down outside and considered what might be done. ‘Will nobody go as a spy among the Trojans?’ said Nestor; he meant would none of the young men go. Diomede said that he would take the risk if any other man would share it with him, and if he might choose a companion he would take Odysseus.

‘Come then, let us be going,’ said Odysseus, ‘for the night is late and the dawn is near.’ As these two chiefs had no armour on they borrowed shields and leather caps from the young men of the guard, for leather would not shine as bronze helmets shine in the firelight. The cap lent to Odysseus was strengthened outside with rows of boars’ tusks. Many of these tusks, shaped for this

purpose, have been found, with swords and armour, in a tomb in Mycenae, the town of Agamemnon. This cap which was lent to Odysseus had once been stolen by his grandfather, Autolycus, who was a master thief, and he gave it as a present to a friend, and so, through several hands, it had come to young Meriones of Crete, one of the five hundred guards, who now lent it to Odysseus. So the two princes set forth in the dark, so dark it was that though they heard a heron cry they could not see it as it flew away.

While Odysseus and Diomede stole through the night silently, like two wolves among the bodies of dead men, the Trojan leaders met and considered what they ought to do. They did not know whether the Greeks had set sentinels and outposts, as usual, to give warning if the enemy were approaching, or whether they were too weary to keep a good watch, or whether perhaps they were getting ready their ships to sail homewards in the dawn. So Hector offered a reward to any man who would creep through the night and spy on the Greeks; he said he would give the spy the two best horses in the Greek camp.

Now among the Trojans there was a young man named Dolon, the son of a rich father, and he was the only boy in a family of five sisters. He was ugly, but a very swift runner, and he cared for horses more than for anything else in the world. Dolon arose and said: 'If you will swear to give me the horses and chariot of Achilles, son of Peleus, I will steal to the hut of Agamemnon and listen and find out whether the Greeks mean to fight or flee.' Hector swore to give these horses, which were the best in the world, to Dolon; so he took his bow and threw a grey wolf's hide over his shoulders and ran towards the ships of the Greeks.

Now Odysseus saw Dolon as he came, and said to Diomede: 'Let us suffer him to pass us, and then do you keep driving him with your spear towards the ships, and away from Troy.' So

Odysseus and Diomede lay down among the dead men who had fallen in the battle, and Dolon ran on past them towards the Greeks. Then they rose and chased him as two greyhounds course a hare, and when Dolon was near the sentinels Diomede cried: 'Stand, or I will slay you with my spear!' and he threw his spear just over Dolon's shoulder. So Dolon stood still, green with fear, and with his teeth chattering. When the two came up he cried and said that his father was a rich man, who would pay much gold and bronze and iron for his ransom.

Odysseus said: 'Take heart and put death out of your mind, and tell us what you are doing here.' Dolon said that Hector had promised him the horses of Achilles if he would go and spy on the Greeks. 'You set your hopes high,' said Odysseus, 'for the horses of Achilles are not earthly steeds, but divine; a gift of the gods, and Achilles alone can drive them. But tell me, do the Trojans keep good watch, and where is Hector with his horses?' for Odysseus thought that it would be a great adventure to drive away the horses of Hector.

'Hector is with the chiefs, holding council at the tomb of Ilus,' said Dolon, 'but no regular guard is set. The people of Troy indeed are round their watch fires, for they have to think of the safety of their wives and children; but the allies from far lands keep no watch, for their wives and children are safe at home.' Then he told where all the different peoples who fought for Priam had their stations; but, said he, 'if you want to steal horses, the best are those of Rhesus, king of the Thracians, who has only joined us tonight. He and his men are asleep at the farthest end of the line, and his horses are the best and greatest that ever I saw: tall, white as snow, and swift as the wind, and his chariot is adorned with gold and silver, and golden is his armour. Now take me prisoner to the ships, or bind me and leave me here while you go and try whether I have told you truth or lies.'

'No,' said Diomede, 'if I spare your life you may come spying again,' and he drew his sword and smote off the head of Dolon. They hid his cap and bow and spear where they could find them easily, and marked the spot, and went through the night to the dark camp of King Rhesus, who had no watch-fire and no guards. Then Diomede silently stabbed each sleeping man to the heart, and Odysseus seized the dead by the feet and threw them aside lest they should frighten the horses, which had never been in battle, and would shy if they were led over the bodies of dead men. Last of all Diomede killed King Rhesus, and Odysseus led forth his horses, beating them with his bow, for he had forgotten to take the whip from the chariot. Then Odysseus and Diomede leaped on the backs of the horses, as they had not time to bring away the chariot, and they galloped to the ships, stopping to pick up the spear and bow and cap of Dolon. They rode to the princes, who welcomed them, and all laughed for glee when they saw the white horses and heard that King Rhesus was dead, for they guessed that all his army would now go home to Thrace. This they must have done, for we never hear of them in the battles that followed, so Odysseus and Diomede deprived the Trojans of thousands of men. The other princes went to bed in good spirits, but Odysseus and Diomede took a swim in the sea, and then went into hot baths, and so to breakfast, for rosy-fingered Dawn was coming up the sky.



VI

BATTLE AT THE SHIPS

WITH dawn Agamemnon awoke, and fear had gone out of his heart. He put on his armour, and arrayed the chiefs on foot in front of their chariots, and behind them came the spearmen, with the bowmen and slingers on the wings of the army. Then a great black cloud spread over the sky, and red was the rain that fell from it. The Trojans gathered on a height in the plain, and Hector, shining in armour, went here and there in front and rear, like a star that now gleams forth and now is hidden in a cloud.

The armies rushed on each other and hewed each other down as reapers cut their way through a field of tall corn. Neither side gave ground, though the helmets of the bravest Trojans might be

seen deep in the ranks of the Greeks; and the swords of the bravest Greeks rose and fell in the ranks of the Trojans, and all the while the arrows showered like rain. But at noonday, when the weary woodman rests from cutting trees and takes his dinner in the quiet hills, the Greeks of the first line made a charge. Agamemnon running in front of them, and he speared two Trojans and took their breastplates, which he laid in his chariot, and then he speared one brother of Hector and struck another down with his sword and killed two more who vainly asked to be made prisoners of war. Footmen slew footmen, and chariot men slew chariot men, and they broke into the Trojan line as fire falls on a forest in a windy day, leaping and roaring and racing through the trees. Many an empty chariot did the horses hurry madly through the field, for the charioteers were lying dead, with the greedy vultures hovering above them, flapping their wide wings. Still Agamemnon followed and slew the hindmost Trojans, but the rest fled till they came to the gates, and the oak tree that grew outside the gates, and there they stopped.

But Hector held his hands from fighting, for in the meantime he was making his men face the enemy and form up in line and take breath, and was encouraging them, for they had retreated from the wall of the Greeks across the whole plain, past the hill that was the tomb of Ilus, a king of old, and past the place of the wild fig tree. Much ado had Hector to rally the Trojans, but he knew that when men do turn again they are hard to beat. So it proved, for when the Trojans had rallied and formed in line, Agamemnon slew a Thracian chief who had come to fight for Troy before King Rhesus came. But the eldest brother of the slain man smote Agamemnon through the arm with his spear, and though Agamemnon slew him in turn, his wound bled much and he was in great pain, so he leaped into his chariot and was driven back to the ships.

Then Hector gave the word to charge, as a huntsman cries on his hounds against a lion, and he rushed forward at the head of the Trojan line, slaying as he went. Nine chiefs of the Greeks he slew, and fell upon the spearmen and scattered them as the spray of the waves is scattered by the wandering wind.

Now the ranks of the Greeks were broken, and they would have been driven among their ships and killed without mercy, had not Odysseus and Diomede stood firm in the centre, and slain four Trojan leaders. The Greeks began to come back and face their enemies in line of battle again, though Hector, who had been fighting on the Trojan right, rushed against them. But Diomede took good aim with his spear at the helmet of Hector, and struck it fairly. The spear-point did not go through the helmet, but Hector was stunned and fell; and when he came to himself he leaped into his chariot, and his squire drove him against the Pylians and Cretans, under Nestor and Idomeneus, who were on the left wing of the Greek army. Then Diomede fought on till Paris, who stood beside the pillar on the hillock that was the tomb of old King Ilus, sent an arrow clean through his foot. Odysseus went and stood in front of Diomede, who sat down, and Odysseus drew the arrow from his foot, and Diomede stepped into his chariot and was driven back to the ships.

Odysseus was now the only Greek chief that still fought in the centre. The Greeks all fled, and he was alone in the crowd of Trojans, who rushed on him as hounds and hunters press round a wild boar that stands at bay in a wood. 'They are cowards that flee from the fight,' said Odysseus to himself, 'but I will stand here, one man against a multitude.' He covered the front of his body with his great shield that hung by a belt round his neck, and he smote four Trojans and wounded a fifth. But the brother of the wounded man drove a spear through the shield and breastplate of Odysseus, and tore clean through his side. Then Odysseus

turned on this Trojan, and he fled, and Odysseus sent a spear through his shoulder and out at his breast, and he died. Odysseus dragged from his own side the spear that had wounded him and called thrice with a great voice to the other Greeks, and Menelaus and Aias rushed to rescue him, for many Trojans were round him, like jackals round a wounded stag that a man has struck with an arrow. But Aias ran and covered the wounded Odysseus with his huge shield till he could climb into the chariot of Menelaus, who drove him back to the ships.

Meanwhile Hector was slaying the Greeks on the left of their battle, and Paris struck the Greek surgeon, Machaon, with an arrow; and Idomeneus bade Nestor put Machaon in his chariot and drive him to Nestor's hut, where his wound might be tended. Meanwhile Hector sped to the centre of the line, where Aias was slaying the Trojans; but Eurypylus, a Greek chief, was wounded by an arrow from the bow of Paris, and his friends guarded him with their shields and spears.

Thus the best of the Greeks were wounded and out of the battle, save Aias, and the spearmen were in flight. Meanwhile Achilles was standing by the stern of his ship watching the defeat of the Greeks; but when he saw Machaon being carried past, sorely wounded, in the chariot of Nestor, he bade his friend Patroclus, whom he loved better than all the rest, to go and ask how Machaon did. He was sitting drinking wine with Nestor when Patroclus came, and Nestor told Patroclus how many of the chiefs were wounded; and though Patroclus was in a hurry Nestor began a very long story about his own great deeds of war, done when he was a young man. At last he bade Patroclus tell Achilles that if he would not fight himself he should at least send out his men under Patroclus, who should wear the splendid armour of Achilles. Then the Trojans would think that Achilles himself had returned to the battle, and they would

be afraid, for none of them dared to meet Achilles hand to hand.

So Patroclus ran off to Achilles; but on his way he met the wounded Eurypylus, and he took him to his hut and cut the arrow out of his thigh with a knife and washed the wound with warm water and rubbed over it a bitter root to take the pain away. Thus he waited for some time with Eurypylus; but the advice of Nestor was in the end to cause the death of Patroclus. The battle now raged more fiercely, while Agamemnon and Diomede and Odysseus could only limp about leaning on their spears; and again Agamemnon wished to moor the ships near shore, and embark in the night and run away. But Odysseus was very angry with him and said: 'You should lead some other inglorious army, not us, who will fight on till every soul of us perish, rather than flee like cowards! Be silent, lest the soldiers hear you speaking of flight—such words as no man should utter. I wholly scorn your counsel, for the Greeks will lose heart if, in the midst of battle, you bid them launch the ships.'

Agamemnon was ashamed, and by Diomede's advice the wounded kings went down to the verge of the war to encourage the others, though they were themselves unable to fight. They rallied the Greeks, and Aias led them and struck Hector full in the breast with a great rock, so that his friends carried him out of the battle to the riverside, where they poured water over him; but he lay fainting on the ground, the black blood gushing up from his mouth. While Hector lay there, and all men thought that he would die, Aias and Idomeneus were driving back the Trojans; and it seemed that, even without Achilles and his men, the Greeks were able to hold their own against the Trojans. But the battle was never lost while Hector lived. People in those days believed in 'omens'; they thought that the appearance of birds on the right or left hand meant good or bad luck. Once during the battle a

Trojan showed Hector an unlucky bird and wanted him to retreat into the town. But Hector said. 'One omen is the best: to fight for our own country.' While Hector lay between death and life the Greeks were winning, for the Trojans had no other great chief to lead them. But Hector awoke from his faint, and leaped to his feet and ran here and there, encouraging the men of Troy. Then the most of the Greeks fled when they saw him; but Aias and Idomeneus, and the rest of the bravest, formed in a square between the Trojans and the ships, and down on them came Hector and Aeneas and Paris, throwing their spears, and slaying on every hand. The Greeks turned and ran, and the Trojans would have stopped to strip the armour from the slain men, but Hector cried: 'Haste to the ships and leave the spoils of war. I will slay any man who lags behind!'

On this all the Trojans drove their chariots down into the ditch that guarded the ships of the Greeks, as when a great wave sweeps at sea over the side of a vessel; and the Greeks were on the ship decks, thrusting with very long spears, used in sea fights, and the Trojans were boarding the ships, and striking with swords and axes. Hector had a lighted torch and tried to set fire to the ship of Aias; but Aias kept him back with the long spear, and slew a Trojan, whose lighted torch fell from his hand. And Aias kept shouting: 'Come on, and drive away Hector; it is not to a dance that he is calling his men, but to battle.'

The dead fell in heaps, and the living ran over them to mount the heaps of slain and climb the ships. Hector rushed forward like a sea wave against a great steep rock, but like the rock stood the Greeks; still the Trojans charged past the beaks of the foremost ships, while Aias, thrusting with a spear more than twenty feet long, leaped from deck to deck like a man that drives four horses abreast, and leaps from the back of one to the back of another. Hector seized with his hand the stern of the ship of Protesilaus,

the prince whom Paris shot when he leaped ashore on the day when the Greeks first landed; and Hector kept calling: 'Bring fire!' And even Aias, in this strange sea fight on land, left the decks and went below, thrusting with his spear through the port-holes. Twelve men lay dead who had brought fire against the ship which Aias guarded.

VII

THE SLAYING AND AVENGING OF PATROCLUS

AT THIS moment, when torches were blazing round the ships and all seemed lost, Patroclus came out of the hut of Eurypylus, whose wound he had been tending, and he saw that the Greeks were in great danger, and ran weeping to Achilles. ‘Why do you weep’, said Achilles, ‘like a little girl that runs by her mother’s side and plucks at her gown and looks at her with tears in her eyes, till her mother takes her up in her arms? Is there bad news from home that your father is dead, or mine? Or are you sorry that the Greeks are getting what they deserve for their folly?’ Then Patroclus told Achilles how Odysseus and many other princes were wounded and could not fight, and begged to be allowed to put on Achilles’ armour and lead his men, who were all fresh and unwearied, into the battle, for a charge of two thousand fresh warriors might turn the fortune of the day.

Then Achilles was sorry that he had sworn not to fight himself till Hector brought fire to his own ships. He would lend Patroclus his armour and his horses and his men; but Patroclus must only drive the Trojans from the ships and not pursue them. At this moment Aias was weary, so many spears smote his armour, and he could hardly hold up his great shield, and Hector cut off his spearhead with the sword; the bronze head fell ringing on the ground, and Aias brandished only the pointless shaft. So he shrank back and fire blazed all over his ship; and Achilles saw it, and smote his thigh and bade Patroclus make haste. Patroclus armed himself in the shining armour of Achilles, which all

Trojans feared, and leaped into the chariot where Automedon, the squire, had harnessed Xanthus and Balios, two horses that were the children, men said, of the West Wind, and a led horse was harnessed beside them in the side traces. Meanwhile the two thousand men of Achilles, who were called Myrmidons, had met in armour—five companies of four hundred apiece under five chiefs of noble names. Forth they came as eager as a pack of wolves that have eaten a great red deer and run to slake their thirst with the dark water of a well in the hills.

So all in close array, helmet touching helmet and shield touching shield, like a moving wall of shining bronze, the men of Achilles charged, and Patroclus in the chariot led the way. Down they came at full speed on the flank of the Trojans, who saw the leader, and knew the bright armour and the horses of the terrible Achilles, and thought that he had returned to the war. Then each Trojan looked round to see by what way he could escape, and when men do that in battle they soon run by the way they have chosen. Patroclus rushed to the ship of Protesilaus and slew the leader of the Trojans there and drove them out and quenched the fire; while they of Troy drew back from the ships, and Aias and the other unwounded Greek princes leaped among them, smiting with sword and spear. Well did Hector know that the break in the battle had come again; but even so he stood and did what he might, while the Trojans were driven back in disorder across the ditch, where the poles of many chariots were broken and the horses fled loose across the plain.

The horses of Achilles cleared the ditch, and Patroclus drove them between the Trojans and the wall of their own town, slaying many men, and chief of all Sarpedon, king of the Lycians; and round the body of Sarpedon the Trojans rallied under Hector, and the fight swayed this way and that, and there was such a noise of spears and swords smiting shields and helmets as when many

woodcutters fell trees in a glen of the hills. At last the Trojans gave way, and the Greeks stripped the armour from the body of brave Sarpedon; but men say that Sleep and Death, like two winged angels, bore his body away to his own country. Now Patroclus forgot how Achilles had told him not to pursue the Trojans across the plain, but to return when he had driven them from the ships. On he raced, slaying as he went, even till he reached the foot of the wall of Troy. Thrice he tried to climb it, but thrice he fell back.

Hector was in his chariot in the gateway, and he bade his squire lash his horses into the war, and struck at no other man, great or small, but drove straight against Patroclus, who stood and threw a heavy stone at Hector, which missed him, but killed his charioteer. Then Patroclus leaped on the charioteer to strip his armour, but Hector stood over the body, grasping it by the head, while Patroclus dragged at the feet, and spears and arrows flew in clouds around the fallen man. At last towards sunset the Greeks drew him out of the war, and Patroclus thrice charged into the thick of the Trojans. But the helmet of Achilles was loosened in the fight and fell from the head of Patroclus, and he was wounded from behind, and Hector, in front, drove his spear clean through his body. With his last breath Patroclus prophesied: 'Death stands near thee, Hector, at the hands of noble Achilles.' But Automedon was driving back the swift horses, carrying to Achilles the news that his dearest friend was slain.

After Odysseus was wounded, early in this great battle, he was not able to fight for several days, and as the story is about Odysseus we must tell quite shortly how Achilles returned to the war to take vengeance for Patroclus and how he slew Hector. When Patroclus fell Hector seized the armour which the gods had given to Peleus, and Peleus to his son Achilles, while Achilles had

lent it to Patroclus that he might terrify the Trojans. Retiring out of reach of spears, Hector took off his own armour and put on that of Achilles, and Greeks and Trojans fought for the dead body of Patroclus. Then Zeus, the chief of the gods, looked down and said that Hector should never come home out of the battle to his wife, Andromache. But Hector returned into the fight around the dead Patroclus, and here all the best men fought, and even Automedon, who had been driving the chariot of Patroclus. Now when the Trojans seemed to have the better of the fight, the Greeks sent Antilochus, a son of old Nestor, to tell Achilles that his friend was slain, and Antilochus ran, and Aias and his brother protected the Greeks who were trying to carry the body of Patroclus back to the ships.

Swiftly Antilochus came running to Achilles, saying: 'Fallen is Patroclus, and they are fighting round his naked body, for Hector has his armour.' Then Achilles said never a word, but fell on the floor of his hut, and threw black ashes on his yellow hair, till Antilochus seized his hands, fearing that he would cut his own throat with his dagger for very sorrow. His mother, Thetis, arose from the sea to comfort him, but he said that he desired to die if he could not slay Hector, who had slain his friend. Then Thetis told him that he could not fight without armour, and now he had none; but she would go to the god of armour-making and bring from him such a shield and helmet and breastplate as had never been seen by men.

Meanwhile the fight raged round the dead body of Patroclus, which was defiled with blood and dust, near the ships, and was being dragged this way and that, and torn and wounded. Achilles could not bear this sight, yet his mother had warned him not to enter without armour the battle where stones and arrows and spears were flying like hail; and he was so tall and broad that he could put on the arms of no other man. So he went down to the

ditch as he was, unarmed ; and as he stood high above it, against the red sunset, fire seemed to flow from his golden hair like the beacon blaze that soars into the dark sky when an island town is attacked at night, and men light beacons that their neighbours may see them and come to their help from other isles. There Achilles stood in a splendour of fire, and he shouted aloud, as clear as a clarion rings when men fall on to attack a besieged city wall. Thrice Achilles shouted mightily, and thrice the horses of the Trojans shuddered for fear and turned back from the onslaught, and thrice the men of Troy were confounded and shaken with terror. Then the Greeks drew the body of Patroclus out of the dust and the arrows, and laid him on a bier, and Achilles followed, weeping, for he had sent his friend with chariot and horses to the war ; but home again he welcomed him never more. Then the sun set, and it was night.

Now one of the Trojans wished Hector to retire within the walls of Troy, for certainly Achilles would tomorrow be foremost in the war. But Hector said : 'Have ye not had your fill of being shut up behind walls ? Let Achilles fight ; I will meet him in the open field.' The Trojans cheered and they camped in the plain, while in the hut of Achilles women washed the dead body of Patroclus, and Achilles swore that he would slay Hector.

In the dawn came Thetis, bearing to Achilles the new splendid armour that the god had made for him. Then Achilles put on that armour and roused his men ; but Odysseus, who knew all the rules of honour, would not let him fight till peace had been made, with a sacrifice and other ceremonies, between him and Agamemnon, and till Agamemnon had given him all the presents which Achilles had before refused. Achilles did not want them ; he wanted only to fight, but Odysseus made him obey and do what was usual. Then the gifts were brought, and Agamemnon stood up and said that he was sorry for his insolence, and the men

took breakfast; but Achilles would neither eat nor drink. He mounted his chariot, but the horse Xanthus bowed his head till his long mane touched the ground, and being a fairy horse, the child of the West Wind, he spoke (or so men said), and these were his words: ‘We shall bear thee swiftly and speedily, but thou shalt be slain in fight, and thy dying day is near at hand.’

‘Well I know it,’ said Achilles, ‘but I will not cease fighting till I have given the Trojans their fill of war.’

So all that day he chased and slew the Trojans. He drove them into the river, and though the river came down in a red flood he crossed it and slew them on the plain. The plain caught fire, the bushes and long dry grass blazed round him; but he fought his way through the fire and drove the Trojans to their walls. The gates were thrown open, and the Trojans rushed through like frightened fawns, and then they climbed to the battlements and looked down in safety, while the whole Greek army advanced in line under their shields.

But Hector stood still, alone in front of the gate, and old Priam, who saw Achilles rushing on, shining like a star in his new armour, called with tears to Hector: ‘Come within the gate! This man has slain many of my sons, and if he slays thee whom have I to help me in my old age?’ His mother also called to Hector, but he stood firm, waiting for Achilles. Now the story says that he was afraid, and ran thrice in full armour round Troy, with Achilles in pursuit. But this cannot be true, for no mortal men could run thrice, in heavy armour, with great shields that clanked against their ankles, round the town of Troy: moreover Hector was the bravest of men, and all the Trojan women were looking down at him from the walls.

We cannot believe that he ran away, and the story goes on to tell that he asked Achilles to make an agreement with him. The conqueror in the fight should give back the body of the fallen to

be buried by his friends, but should keep his armour. But Achilles said that he could make no agreement with Hector, and threw his spear, which flew over Hector's shoulder. Then Hector threw his spear, but it could not pierce the shield which the god had made for Achilles. Hector had no other spear, and Achilles had one; so Hector cried: 'Let me not die without honour!' and drew his sword, and rushed at Achilles, who sprang to meet him, but before Hector could come within a sword stroke Achilles had sent his spear clean through the neck of Hector. He fell in the dust and Achilles said: 'Dogs and birds shall tear your flesh unburied.' With his dying breath Hector prayed him to take gold from Priam, and give back his body to be burned in Troy. But Achilles said: 'Hound! would that I could bring myself to carve and eat thy raw flesh, but dogs shall devour it, even if thy father offered me thy weight in gold.' With his last words Hector prophesied and said: 'Remember me in the day when Paris shall slay thee in the Scaean gate.' Then his brave soul went to the land of the dead, which the Greeks called Hades. To that land Odysseus sailed while he was still a living man, as the story tells later.

Then Achilles did a dreadful deed; he slit the feet of dead Hector from heel to ankle, and thrust thongs through, and bound him by the thongs to his chariot and trailed the body in the dust. All the women of Troy who were on the walls raised a shriek, and Hector's wife, Andromache, heard the sound. She had been in an inner room of her house, weaving a purple web and embroidering flowers on it, and she was calling her bower maidens to make ready a bath for Hector when he should come back tired from battle. But when she heard the cry from the wall she trembled, and the shuttle with which she was weaving fell from her hands. 'Surely I heard the cry of my husband's mother,' she said, and she bade two of her maidens come with her to see why the people lamented.



She ran swiftly and reached the battlements, and thence she saw her dear husband's body being whirled through the dust towards the ships, behind the chariot of Achilles. Then night came over her eyes and she fainted. But when she returned to herself she cried out that now none would defend her little boy, and other children would push him away from feasts, saying: 'Out with you; no father of thine is at our table,' and his father, Hector, would lie naked at the ships, unclad, unburned, unlamented. To be unburned and unburied was thought the greatest of misfortunes, because the dead man unburned could not go into the House of Hades, God of the Dead, but must always wander, alone and comfortless, in the dark borderland between the dead and the living.



VIII

THE CRUELTY OF ACHILLES, AND THE RANSOMING OF HECTOR

WHEN Achilles was asleep that night the ghost of Patroclus came, saying: 'Why dost thou not burn and bury me? for the other shadows of dead men suffer me not to come near them, and lonely I wander along the dark dwelling of Hades.' Then Achilles awoke, and he sent men to cut down trees, and make a huge pile of faggots and logs. On this they laid Patroclus, covered with white linen, and then they slew many cattle, and Achilles cut the throats of twelve Trojan prisoners of war, meaning to burn them with Patroclus to do him honour. This was a deed of shame, for Achilles was mad with sorrow and anger for the death of his friend. Then they drenched with wine the great pile of wood, which was thirty yards long and broad, and set fire to it, and the fire blazed all through the night and died down in the morning. They put the white bones of Patroclus in a golden casket, and laid it in the hut of Achilles, who said that when he died they must burn his body and mix the ashes

with the ashes of his friend, and build over it a chamber of stone and cover the chamber with a great hill of earth, and set a pillar of stone above it. This is one of the hills on the plain of Troy, but the pillar has fallen from the tomb long ago.

Then, as the custom was, Achilles held games—chariot races, foot races, boxing, wrestling and archery—in honour of Patroclus. Odysseus won the prize for the foot race and for the wrestling, so now his wound must have been healed.

But Achilles still kept trailing Hector's dead body each day round the hill that had been raised for the tomb of Patroclus, till the gods in heaven were angry and bade Thetis tell her son that he must give back the dead body to Priam and take ransom for it, and they sent a messenger to Priam to bid him redeem the body of his son. It was terrible for Priam to have to go and humble himself before Achilles, whose hands had been red with the blood of his sons, but he did not disobey the gods. He opened his chests and took out twenty-four beautiful embroidered changes of raiment; and he weighed out ten heavy bars, or talents, of gold and chose a beautiful golden cup, and he called nine of his sons, Paris and Helenus and Deiphobus and the rest, saying: 'Go, ye bad sons, my shame; would that Hector lived and all of you were dead!' for sorrow made him angry. 'Go, and get ready for me a wain and lay on it these treasures.' So they harnessed mules to the wain and placed in it the treasures, and after praying Priam drove through the night to the hut of Achilles. In he went, when no man looked for him, and kneeled to Achilles, and kissed his terrible death-dealing hands. 'Have pity on me and fear the gods and give me back my dead son,' he said, 'and remember thine own father. Have pity on me, who have endured to do what no man born has ever done before, to kiss the hands that slew my sons.'

Then Achilles remembered his own father, far away, who now was old and weak, and he wept, and Priam wept with him; and

then Achilles raised Priam from his knees and spoke kindly to him, admiring how beautiful he still was in his old age, and Priam himself wondered at the beauty of Achilles. And Achilles thought how Priam had long been rich and happy, like his own father, Peleus, and now old age and weakness and sorrow were laid upon both of them, for Achilles knew that his own day of death was at hand, even at the doors. So Achilles bade the women make ready the body of Hector for burial, and they clothed him in a white mantle that Priam had brought and laid him in the wain; and supper was made ready and Priam and Achilles ate and drank together, and the women spread a bed for Priam, who would not stay long, but stole away back to Troy while Achilles was asleep.

All the women came out to meet him, and to lament for Hector. They carried the body into the house of Andromache and laid it on a bed, and the women gathered around, and each in turn sang her song over the great dead warrior. His mother bewailed him, and his wife, and Helen of the fair hands, clad in dark mourning raiment, lifted up her white arms, and said: 'Hector, of all my brethren in Troy thou wert the dearest, since Paris brought me hither. Would that ere that day I had died! For this is now the twentieth year since I came, and in all these twenty years never heard I a word from thee that was bitter and unkind; others might upbraid me, thy sisters or thy mother—for thy father was good to me as if he had been my own—but then thou wouldst restrain them that spoke evil, by the courtesy of thy heart and thy gentle words. Ah! woe for thee, and woe for me, whom all men shudder at, for there is now none in wide Troyland to be my friend like thee, my brother and my friend!'

So Helen lamented, but now was done all that men might do; a great pile of wood was raised and Hector was burned, and his ashes were placed in a golden urn, in a dark chamber of stone within a hollow hill.



IX

HOW ODYSSEUS STOLE THE LUCK OF TROY

AFTER Hector was buried the siege went on slowly, as it had done during the first nine years of the war. The Greeks did not know at that time how to besiege a city, as we saw, by way of digging trenches and building towers, and battering the walls with machines that threw heavy stones. The Trojans had lost courage, and dared not go into the open plain, and they were waiting for the coming up of new armies of allies—the Amazons, who were girl warriors from far away, and an eastern people called the Khita, whose king was Memnon, the son of the bright Dawn.

Now everyone knew that in the temple of the goddess Pallas

Athene in Troy was a sacred image, which fell from heaven, called the Palladium, and this very ancient image was the Luck of Troy. While it remained safe in the temple people believed that Troy could never be taken, but as it was in a guarded temple in the middle of the town, and was watched by priestesses day and night, it seemed impossible that the Greeks should ever enter the city secretly and steal the Luck away.

As Odysseus was the grandson of Autolycus, the master thief, he often wished that the old man was with the Greeks, for if there was a thing to steal Autolycus could steal it. But by this time Autolycus was dead, and so Odysseus could only puzzle over the way to steal the Luck of Troy, and wonder how his grandfather would have set about it. He prayed for help secretly to Hermes, the God of Thieves, when he sacrificed goats to him, and at last he had a plan.

There was a story that Anius, the King of the Isle of Delos, had three daughters, named Oeno, Spermo and Elais, and that Oeno could turn water into wine, while Spermo could turn stones into bread, and Elais could change mud into olive oil. Those fairy gifts, people said, were given to the maidens by the Wine God, Dionysus, and by the Goddess of Corn, Demeter. Now corn and wine and oil were sorely needed by the Greeks, who were tired of paying much gold and bronze to the Phoenician merchants for their supplies. Odysseus therefore went to Agamemnon one day, and asked leave to take his ship and voyage to Delos, to bring, if he could, the three maidens to the camp, if indeed they could do these miracles. As no fighting was going on, Agamemnon gave Odysseus leave to depart, so he went on board his ship, with a crew of fifty men of Ithaca, and away they sailed, promising to return in a month.

Two or three days after that, a dirty old beggar man began to be seen in the Greek camp. He had crawled in late one evening,

dressed in a dirty smock and a very dirty old cloak, full of holes, and stained with smoke. Over everything he wore the skin of a stag, with half the hair worn off, and he carried a staff, and a filthy tattered wallet, to put food in, which swung from his neck by a cord. He came crouching and smiling up to the door of the hut of Diomede, and sat down just within the doorway, where beggars still sit in the East. Diomede saw him, and sent him a loaf and two handfuls of flesh, which the beggar laid on his wallet, between his feet, and he made his supper greedily, gnawing a bone like a dog.

After supper Diomede asked him who he was and whence he came; and he told a long story about how he had been a Cretan pirate and had been taken prisoner by the Egyptians when he was robbing there, and how he had worked for many years in their stone quarries, where the sun had burned him brown, and had escaped by hiding among the great stones, carried down the Nile in a raft, for building a temple on the seashore. The raft arrived at night, and the beggar said that he stole out from it in the dark and found a Phoenician ship in the harbour, and the Phoenicians took him on board, meaning to sell him somewhere as a slave. But a tempest came on and wrecked the ship off the Isle of Tenedos, which is near Troy, and the beggar alone escaped to the island on a plank of the ship. From Tenedos he had come to Troy in a fisher's boat, hoping to make himself useful in the camp and earn enough to keep body and soul together till he could find a ship sailing to Crete.

He made his story rather amusing, describing the strange ways of the Egyptians; how they worshipped cats and bulls, and did everything in just the opposite of the Greek way of doing things. So Diomede let him have a rug and blankets to sleep on in the portico of the hut, and next day the old wretch went begging about the camp and talking with the soldiers. Now he was a most impudent and annoying old vagabond, and was always in quarrels.

If there was a disagreeable story about the father or grandfather of any of the princes, he knew it and told it, so that he got a blow from the baton of Agamemnon, and Aias gave him a kick, and Idomeneus drubbed him with the butt of his spear for a tale about his grandmother, and everybody hated him and called him a nuisance. He was for ever jeering at Odysseus, who was far away, and telling tales about Autolycus, and at last he stole a gold cup, a very large cup, with two handles, and a dove sitting on each handle, from the hut of Nestor. The old chief was fond of this cup, which he had brought from home, and when it was found in the beggar's dirty wallet everybody cried that he must be driven out of the camp and well whipped. So Nestor's son, young Thrasymedes, with other young men, laughing and shouting, pushed and dragged the beggar close up to the Scaean gate of Troy, where Thrasymedes called with a loud voice: 'O Trojans, we are sick of this shameless beggar. First we shall whip him well, and if he comes back we shall put out his eyes and cut off his hands and feet, and give him to the dogs to eat. He may go to you if he likes; if not he must wander till he dies of hunger.'

The young men of Troy heard this and laughed, and a crowd gathered on the wall to see the beggar punished. So Thrasymedes whipped him with his bowstring till he was tired, and they did not leave off beating the beggar till he ceased howling and fell, all bleeding, and lay still. Then Thrasymedes gave him a parting kick, and went away with his friends. The beggar lay quiet for some time, then he began to stir, and sat up, wiping the tears from his eyes, and shouting curses and bad words after the Greeks, praying that they might be speared in the back and eaten by dogs.

At last he tried to stand up, but fell down again, and began to crawl on hands and knees towards the Scaean gate. There he sat down, within the two side walls of the gate, where he cried and lamented. Now Helen of the fair hands came down from the gate

tower, being sorry to see any man treated so much worse than a beast, and she spoke to the beggar and asked him why he had been used in this cruel way?

At first he only moaned and rubbed his sore sides, but at last he said that he was an unhappy man, who had been shipwrecked and was begging his way home, and that the Greeks suspected him of being a spy sent out by the Trojans. But he had been in Lacedaemon, her own country, he said, and could tell her about her father, if she were as he supposed, the beautiful Helen, and about her brothers, Castor and Polydeuces, and her little daughter, Hermione.

'But perhaps', he said, 'you are no mortal woman, but some goddess who favours the Trojans, and if indeed you are a goddess then I liken you to Aphrodite, for beauty and stature and shapeliness.' Then Helen wept; for many a year had passed since she had heard any word of her father and daughter and her brothers, who were dead, though she knew it not. So she stretched out her white hand, and raised the beggar, who was kneeling at her feet, and bade him follow her to her own house, within the palace garden of King Priam.

Helen walked forward, with a bower maiden at either side, and the beggar crawling after her. When she had entered her house Paris was not there, so she ordered the bath to be filled with warm water, and new clothes to be brought, and she herself washed the old beggar and anointed him with oil. This appears very strange to us, for though Saint Elizabeth of Hungary used to wash and clothe beggars, we are surprised that Helen should do so, who was not a saint. But long afterwards she herself told the son of Odysseus, Telemachus, that she had washed his father when he came into Troy disguised as a beggar who had been sorely beaten.

You must have guessed that the beggar was Odysseus, who had

not gone to Delos in his ship, but stolen back in a boat and appeared disguised among the Greeks. He did all this to make sure that nobody could recognize him, and he behaved so as to deserve a whipping that he might not be suspected as a Greek spy by the Trojans, but rather be pitied by them. Certainly he deserved his name of 'the much-enduring Odysseus'.

Meanwhile he sat in his bath and Helen washed his feet. But when she had done, and had anointed his wounds with olive oil, and when she had clothed him in a white tunic and a purple mantle, then she opened her lips to cry out with amazement, for she knew Odysseus; but he laid his finger on her lips, saying 'Hush!' Then she remembered how great a danger he was in, for the Trojans if they found him would put him to some cruel death, and she sat down, trembling and weeping, while he watched her.

'Oh, thou strange one,' she said, 'how enduring is thy heart and how cunning beyond measure! How hast thou borne to be thus beaten and disgraced and to come within the walls of Troy? Well it is for thee that Paris, my lord, is far from home, having gone to guide Penthesilea, the queen of the warrior maids whom men call Amazons, who is on her way to help the Trojans.'

Then Odysseus smiled, and Helen saw that she had said a word which she ought not to have spoken, and had revealed the secret hope of the Trojans. Then she wept and said: 'Oh, cruel and cunning! You have made me betray the people with whom I live, though woe is me that ever I left my own people, and my husband dear, and my child! And now if you escape alive out of Troy you will tell the Greeks, and they will lie in ambush by night for the Amazons on the way to Troy and will slay them all. If you and I were not friends long ago, I would tell the Trojans that you are here, and they would give your body to the dogs to eat, and fix your head on the palisade above the wall. Woe is me that ever I was born.'

Odysseus answered: 'Lady, as you have said, we two are friends from of old, and your friend I will be till the last, when the Greeks break into Troy, and slay the men, and carry the women captives. If I live till that hour no man shall harm you, but safely and in honour you shall come to your palace in Lacedaemon of the rifted hills. Moreover I swear to you a great oath by Zeus above, and by them that under earth punish the souls of men who swear falsely, that I shall tell no man the thing which you have spoken.'

So when he had sworn and done that oath, Helen was comforted and dried her tears. Then she told him how unhappy she was and how she had lost her last comfort when Hector died. 'Always am I wretched,' she said, 'save when sweet sleep falls on me. Now the wife of Thon, King of Egypt, gave me this gift when we were in Egypt, on our way to Troy, namely, a drug that brings sleep even to the most unhappy, and it is pressed from the poppy heads of the garland of the God of Sleep.' Then she showed him strange phials of gold full of this drug: phials wrought by the Egyptians, and covered with magic spells and shapes of beasts and flowers. 'One of these I will give you,' she said, 'that even from Troy town you may not go without a gift in memory of the hands of Helen.' So Odysseus took the phial of gold and was glad in his heart, and Helen set before him meat and wine. When he had eaten and drunk, and his strength had come back to him, he said:

'Now I must dress me again in my old rags, and take my wallet and my staff, and go forth and beg through Troy town. For here I must abide for some days as a beggar man, lest if I now escape from your house in the night the Trojans may think that you have told me the secrets of their counsel, which I am carrying to the Greeks, and may be angry with you.' So he clothed himself again as a beggar, and took his staff, and hid the phial of gold with the Egyptian drug in his rags, and in his wallet also he put the new

clothes that Helen had given him, and a sword, and he took farewell, saying: 'Be of good heart, for the end of your sorrows is at hand. But if you see me among the beggars in the street, or by the well, take no heed of me, only I will salute you as a beggar who has been kindly treated by a queen.'

So they parted, and Odysseus went out, and when it was day he was with the beggars in the streets, but by night he commonly slept near the fire of a smithy forge, as is the way of beggars. So for some days he begged, saying that he was gathering food to eat while he walked to some town far away that was at peace, where he might find work to do. He was not impudent now, and did not go to rich men's houses or tell evil tales or laugh, but he was much in the temples, praying to the gods, and above all in the temple of Pallas Athene. The Trojans thought that he was a pious man for a beggar.

Now there was a custom in these times that men and women who were sick or in distress should sleep at night on the floors of the temples. They did this hoping that the god would send them a dream to show them how their diseases might be cured, or how they might find what they had lost, or might escape from their distresses.

Odysseus slept in more than one temple, and once in that of Pallas Athene, and the priests and priestesses were kind to him and gave him food in the morning when the gates of the temple were opened.

In the temple of Pallas Athene, where the Luck of Troy lay always on her altar, the custom was that priestesses kept watch, each for two hours all through the night, and soldiers kept guard within call. So one night Odysseus slept there on the floor with other distressed people, seeking for dreams from the gods. He lay still all through the night till the turn of the last priestess came to watch. The priestess used to walk up and down with bare feet among the dreaming people, having a torch in her hand, and

muttering hymns to the goddess. Then Odysseus, when her back was turned, slipped the gold phial out of his rags, and let it lie on the polished floor beside him. When the priestess came back again the light from her torch fell on the glittering phial, and she stooped and picked it up, and looked at it curiously. There came from it a sweet fragrance, and she opened it and tasted the drug. It seemed to her the sweetest thing that ever she had tasted, and she took more and more, and then closed the phial and laid it down and went along murmuring her hymn.

But soon a great drowsiness came over her, and she sat down on the step of the altar and fell sound asleep, and the torch sunk in her hand and went out, and all was dark. Then Odysseus put the phial in his wallet, and crept very cautiously to the altar in the dark and stole the Luck of Troy. It was only a small black mass of what is now called meteoric iron, which sometimes comes down with meteorites from the sky, but it was shaped like a shield, and the people thought it an image of the warlike shielded goddess, fallen from Heaven. Such sacred shields, made of glass and ivory, are found deep in the earth in the ruined cities of Odysseus' time. Swiftly Odysseus hid the Luck in his rags and left in its place on the altar a copy of the Luck, which he had made of blackened clay. Then he stole back to the place where he had lain, and remained there till dawn appeared, and the sleepers who sought for dreams awoke, and the temple gates were opened, and Odysseus walked out with the rest of them.

He stole down a lane, where as yet no people were stirring, and crept along, leaning on his staff, till he came to the eastern gate at the back of the city, which the Greeks never attacked, for they had never drawn their army in a circle round the town. There Odysseus explained to the sentinels that he had gathered food enough to last for a long journey to some other town, and opened his bag, which seemed full of bread and broken meat. The soldiers

said he was a lucky beggar and let him out. He walked slowly along the wagon road by which wood was brought into Troy from the forests on Mount Ida, and when he found that nobody was within sight he slipped into the forest, and stole into a dark thicket, hiding beneath the tangled boughs. Here he lay and slept till evening, and then took the new clothes which Helen had given him out of his wallet, and put them on, and threw the belt of the sword over his shoulder, and hid the Luck of Troy in his bosom. He washed himself clean in a mountain brook, and now all who saw him must have known that he was no beggar, but Odysseus of Ithaca, Laertes' son.

So he walked cautiously down the side of the brook which ran between high banks deep in trees, and followed it till it reached the River Xanthus, on the left of the Greek lines. Here he found Greek sentinels set to guard the camp, who cried aloud in joy and surprise, for his ship had not yet returned from Delos, and they could not guess how Odysseus had come back alone across the sea. So two of the sentinels guarded Odysseus to the hut of Agamemnon, where he and Achilles and all the chiefs were sitting at a feast. They all leaped up, but when Odysseus took the Luck of Troy from within his mantle they cried that this was the bravest deed that had been done in the war and they sacrificed ten oxen to Zeus.

'So you were the old beggar,' said young Thrasymedes.

'Yes,' said Odysseus, 'and when next you beat a beggar, Thrasymedes, do not strike so hard and so long.'

That night all the Greeks were full of hope, for now they had the Luck of Troy, but the Trojans were in despair, and guessed that the beggar was the thief, and that Odysseus had been the beggar. The priestess Theano could tell them nothing; they found her, with the extinguished torch drooping in her hand, asleep, as she sat on the step of the altar, and she never woke again.



See page 46

THE TROJANS DROVE THEIR CHARIOTS DOWN INTO
THE DITCH THAT GUARDED THE SHIPS OF THE GREEKS.



THE BATTLES WITH THE AMAZONS AND MEMNON— THE DEATH OF ACHILLES

O DYSSEUS thought much and often of Helen, without whose kindness he could not have saved the Greeks by stealing the Luck of Troy. He saw that, though she remained as beautiful as when the princes all sought her hand, she was most unhappy, knowing herself to be the cause of so much misery and fearing what the future might bring. Odysseus told nobody about the secret which she had let fall, the coming of the Amazons.

The Amazons were a race of warlike maids, who lived far away on the banks of the River Thermodon. They had fought against Troy in former times, and one of the great hill-graves on the plain

of Troy covered the ashes of an Amazon, swift-footed Myrine. People believed that they were the daughters of the God of War, and they were reckoned equal in battle to the bravest men. Their young queen, Penthesilea, had two reasons for coming to fight at Troy: one was her ambition to win renown, and the other her sleepless sorrow for having accidentally killed her sister, Hippolyte, when hunting. The spear which she threw at a stag struck Hippolyte and slew her, and Penthesilea cared no longer for her own life, and desired to fall gloriously in battle. So Penthesilea and her bodyguard of twelve Amazons set forth from the wide streams of Thermodon, and rode into Troy. The story says that they did not drive in chariots, like all the Greek and Trojan chiefs, but rode horses, which must have been the manner of their country.

Penthesilea was the tallest and most beautiful of the Amazons, and shone among her twelve maidens like the moon among the stars, or the bright Dawn among the Hours which follow her chariot wheels. The Trojans rejoiced when they beheld her, for she looked both terrible and beautiful, with a frown on her brow, and fair shining eyes, and a blush on her cheeks. To the Trojans she came like Iris, the Rainbow, after a storm, and they gathered round her cheering and throwing flowers and kissing her stirrup, as the people of Orleans welcomed Joan of Arc when she came to deliver them. Even Priam was glad, as is a man long blind, when he has been healed, and again looks upon the light of the sun. Priam held a great feast, and gave to Penthesilea many beautiful gifts—cups of gold and embroideries and a sword with a hilt of silver. And she vowed that she would slay Achilles. But when Andromache, the wife of Hector, heard her she said within herself: ‘Ah, unhappy girl, what is this boast of thine! Thou hast not the strength to fight the unconquerable son of Peleus, for if Hector could not slay him, what chance hast thou? But the piled-up earth covers Hector!’

In the morning Penthesilea sprang up from sleep and put on her glorious armour, with spear in hand and sword at side, and bow and quiver hung behind her back, and her great shield covering her side from neck to stirrup, and mounted her horse and galloped to the plain. Beside her charged the twelve maidens of her bodyguard and all the company of Hector's brothers and kinsfolk. These headed the Trojan lines, and they rushed towards the ships of the Greeks.

Then the Greeks asked each other: 'Who is this that leads the Trojans as Hector led them? Surely some god rides in the van of the charioteers!' Odysseus could have told them who the new leader of the Trojans was, but it seems that he had not the heart to fight against women, for his name is not mentioned in this day's battle. So the two lines clashed and the plain of Troy ran red with blood, for Penthesilea slew Molion and Persinoos and Eilissos and Antiphates, and Lernos high of heart, and Hippalmos of the loud war-cry, and Haemonides and strong Elasippus; while her maidens Derinoe and Clonie slew each a chief of the Greeks. But Clonie fell beneath the spear of Podarkes, whose hand Penthesilea cut off with the sword, while Idomeneus speared the Amazon Bremousa, and Meriones of Crete slew Evandre, and Diomede killed Alcibie and Derimacheia in close fight with the sword, so the company of the twelve were thinned—the body-guard of Penthesilea.

The Trojans and Greeks kept slaying each other, but Penthesilea avenged her maidens, driving the ranks of Greece as a lioness drives the cattle on the hills, for they could not stand before her. Then she shouted: 'Dogs! today shall you pay for the sorrows of Priam! Where is Diomede, where is Achilles, where is Aias, that men say are your bravest? Will none of them stand before my spear?' Then she charged again, at the head of the household of Priam, brothers and kinsmen of Hector, and where

they came the Greeks fell like yellow leaves before the wind of autumn. The white horse that Penthesilea rode, a gift from the wife of the North Wind, flashed like lightning through a dark cloud among the companies of the Greeks, and the chariots that followed the charge of the Amazon rocked as they swept over the bodies of the slain. Then the old Trojans, watching from the walls, cried : 'This is no mortal maiden but a goddess, and today she will burn the ships of the Greeks, and they will all perish in Troyland, and see Greece never more again.'

Now it so was that Aias and Achilles had not heard the din and the cry of war, for both had gone to weep over the great new grave of Patroclus. Penthesilea and the Trojans had driven back the Greeks within their ditch, and they were hiding here and there among the ships, and torches were blazing in men's hands to burn the ships, as in the day of the valour of Hector—when Aias heard the din of battle and called to Achilles to make speed towards the ships.

So they ran swiftly to their huts and armed themselves, and Aias fell smiting and slaying upon the Trojans, but Achilles slew five of the bodyguard of Penthesilea. She, beholding her maidens fallen, rode straight against Aias and Achilles, like a dove defying two falcons, and cast her spear, but it fell back blunted from the glorious shield that the god had made for the son of Peleus. Then she threw another spear at Aias, crying : 'I am the daughter of the God of War!' but his armour kept out the spear, and he and Achilles laughed aloud. Aias paid no more heed to the Amazon, but rushed against the Trojan men, while Achilles raised the heavy spear that none but he could throw, and drove it down through breastplate and breast of Penthesilea, yet still her hand grasped her sword-hilt. But ere she could draw her sword Achilles speared her horse, and horse and rider fell, and died in their fall.

There lay fair Penthesilea in the dust, like a tall poplar tree that

the wind has overthrown, and her helmet fell, and the Greeks who gathered round marvelled to see her lie so beautiful in death, like Artemis, the Goddess of the Woods, when she sleeps alone, weary with hunting on the hills. Then the heart of Achilles was pierced with pity and sorrow, thinking how she might have been his wife in his own country had he spared her, but he was never to see pleasant Phthia, his native land, again. So Achilles stood and wept over Penthesilea dead.

Now the Greeks, in pity and sorrow, held their hands, and did not pursue the Trojans who had fled, nor did they strip the armour from Penthesilea and her twelve maidens, but laid the bodies on biers and sent them back in peace to Priam. Then the Trojans burned Penthesilea in the midst of her dead maidens on a great pile of dry wood, and placed their ashes in a golden casket and buried them all in the great hill-grave of Laomedon, an ancient king of Troy, while the Greeks with lamentation buried them whom the Amazon had slain.

The old men of Troy and the chiefs now held a council, and Priam said that they must not yet despair, for if they had lost many of their bravest warriors many of the Greeks had also fallen. Their best plan was to fight only with arrows from the walls and towers, till King Memnon came to their rescue with a great army of Aethiopes. Now Memnon was the son of the bright Dawn, a beautiful goddess who had loved and married a mortal man, Tithonus. She had asked Zeus, the chief of the gods, to make her lover immortal, and her prayer was granted. Tithonus could not die, but he began to grow grey, and then white-haired, with a long white beard, and very weak, till nothing of him seemed to be left but his voice, always feebly chattering like the grass-hoppers on a summer day.

Memnon was the most beautiful of men, except Paris and Achilles, and his home was in a country that borders on the land

of sunrising. There he was reared by the lily maidens called Hesperides, till he came to his full strength and commanded the whole army of the Aethiopes. For their arrival Priam wished to wait, but Polydamas advised that the Trojans should give back Helen to the Greeks, with jewels twice as valuable as those which she had brought from the house of Menelaus. Then Paris was very angry, and said that Polydamas was a coward, for it was little to Paris that Troy should be taken and burned in a month if for a month he could keep Helen of the fair hands.

At length Memnon came, leading a great army of men who had nothing white about them but the teeth, so fiercely the sun burned on them in their own country. The Trojans had all the more hopes of Memnon, because on his long journey from the land of sunrising and the River Oceanus that girdles the world, he had been obliged to cross the country of the Solymi. Now the Solymi were the fiercest of men and rose up against Memnon, but he and his army fought them for a whole day, and defeated them and drove them to the hills. When Memnon came Priam gave him a great cup of gold, full of wine to the brim, and Memnon drank the wine

at one draught. But he did not make great boasts of what he could do, like poor Penthesilea, 'for', said he, 'whether I am a good man at arms will be known in battle, where the strength of men is tried. So now let us turn to sleep, for to wake and drink wine all through the night is an ill beginning of war.'



Then Priam praised his wisdom, and all men betook them to bed, but the bright Dawn rose unwillingly next day, to throw light on the battle where her son was to risk his life. Then Memnon led out the dark clouds of his men into the plain and the Greeks foreboded evil when they saw so great a new army of fresh and unwearied warriors; but Achilles, leading them in his shining armour, gave them courage. Memnon fell upon the left wing of the Greeks and on the men of Nestor, and first he slew Ereuthus, and then attacked Nestor's young son, Antilochus, who, now that Patroclus had fallen, was the dearest friend of Achilles. On him Memnon leaped, like a lion on a kid, but Antilochus lifted a huge stone from the plain, a pillar that had been set on the tomb of some great warrior long ago, and the stone smote full on the helmet of Memnon, who reeled beneath the stroke. But Memnon seized his heavy spear and drove it through shield and corselet of Antilochus, even into his heart, and he fell and died beneath his father's eyes. Then Nestor in great sorrow and anger strode across the body of Antilochus and called to his other son, Thrasymedes: 'Come and drive afar this man that has slain thy brother, for if fear be in thy heart thou art no son of mine, nor of the race of Periclymenus, who stood up in battle even against the strong man Heracles!'

But Memnon was too strong for Thrasymedes and drove him off, while old Nestor himself charged sword in hand, though Memnon bade him begone, for he was not minded to strike so aged a man, and Nestor drew back, for he was weak with age. Then Memnon and his army charged the Greeks, slaying and stripping the dead. But Nestor had mounted his chariot and driven to Achilles, weeping and imploring him to come swiftly and save the body of Antilochus, and he sped to meet Memnon, who lifted a great stone, the landmark of a field, and drove it against the shield of the son of Peleus. But Achilles was not

shaken by the blow; he ran forward and wounded Memnon over the rim of his shield. Yet wounded as he was Memnon fought on and struck his spear through the arm of Achilles, for the Greeks fought with no sleeves of bronze to protect their arms.

Then Achilles drew his great sword and flew on Memnon, and with sword strokes they lashed at each other on shield and helmet, and the long horsehair crests of the helmets were shorn off, and flew down the wind, and their shields rang terribly beneath the sword strokes. They thrust at each other's throats between shield and visor of the helmet, they smote at knee, and thrust at breast, and the armour rang about their bodies, and the dust from beneath their feet rose up in a cloud around them, like mist round the falls of a great river in flood. So they fought, neither of them yielding a step, till Achilles made so rapid a thrust that Memnon could not parry it, and the bronze sword passed clean through his body beneath the breast-bone, and he fell, and his armour clashed as he fell.

Then Achilles, wounded as he was and weak from loss of blood, did not stay to strip the golden armour of Memnon, but shouted his war-cry and pressed on, for he hoped to enter the gate of Troy with the fleeing Trojans, and all the Greeks followed after him. So they pursued, slaying as they went, and the Scaean gate was choked with the crowd of men, pursuing and pursued. In that hour would the Greeks have entered Troy, and burned the city, and taken the women captive, but Paris stood on the tower above the gate, and in his mind was anger for the death of his brother Hector. He tried the string of his bow, and found it frayed, for all day he had showered his arrows on the Greeks; so he chose a new bowstring, and fitted it and strung the bow and chose an arrow from his quiver and aimed at the ankle of Achilles, where it was bare beneath the greave or leg-guard of metal that the god had fashioned for him. Through the ankle flew the

arrow, and Achilles wheeled round, weak as he was, and stumbled and fell, and the armour that the god had wrought was defiled with dust and blood.

Then Achilles rose again and cried : 'What coward has smitten me with a secret arrow from afar? Let him stand forth and meet me with sword and spear!' So speaking he seized the shaft with his strong hands and tore it out of the wound, and much blood gushed, and darkness came over his eyes. Yet he staggered forward, striking blindly, and smote Orythaon, a dear friend of Hector, through the helmet, and others he smote; but now his force failed him, and he leaned on his spear, and cried his war-cry and said : 'Cowards of Troy, ye shall not all escape my spear, dying as I am.' But as he spoke he fell and all his armour rang around him; yet the Trojans stood apart and watched; and as hunters watch a dying lion not daring to go nigh him, so the Trojans stood in fear till Achilles drew his latest breath. Then from the wall the Trojan women raised a great cry of joy over him who had slain the noble Hector: and thus was fulfilled the prophecy of Hector, that Achilles should fall in the Scaean gateway by the hand of Paris.

Then the best of the Trojans rushed forth from the gate to seize the body of Achilles and his glorious armour, but the Greeks were as eager to carry the body to the ships that it might have due burial. Round the dead Achilles men fought long and sore, and both sides were mixed, Greeks and Trojans, so that men dared not shoot arrows from the walls of Troy lest they should kill their own friends. Paris and Aeneas and Glaucus, who had been the friend of Sarpedon, led the Trojans, and Aias and Odysseus led the Greeks, for we are not told that Agamemnon was fighting in this great battle of the war. Now as angry wild bees flock round a man who is taking their honeycombs, so the Trojans gathered round Aias, striving to stab him, but he set his great

shield in front, and smote and slew all that came within reach of his spear. Odysseus too struck down many, and though a spear was thrown and pierced his leg near the knee, he stood firm, protecting the body of Achilles. At last Odysseus caught the body of Achilles by the hands and heaved it upon his back, and so limped towards the ships, but Aias and the men of Aias followed, turning round if ever the Trojans ventured to come near, and charging into the midst of them. Thus very slowly they bore the dead Achilles across the plain, through the bodies of the fallen and the blood, till they met Nestor in his chariot and placed Achilles therein, and swiftly Nestor drove to the ships.

There the women, weeping, washed Achilles' comely body and laid him on a bier with a great white mantle over him, and all the women lamented and sang dirges, and the first was Briseis, who loved Achilles better than her own country and her father and her brothers whom he had slain in war. The Greek princes too stood round the body, weeping and cutting off their long locks of yellow hair, a token of grief and an offering to the dead.

Men say that forth from the sea came Thetis of the silver feet, the mother of Achilles, with her ladies, the deathless maidens of the waters. They rose up from their glassy chambers below the sea, moving on, many and beautiful, like the waves on a summer day, and their sweet song echoed along the shores, and fear came upon the Greeks. Then they would have fled, but Nestor cried: 'Hold, flee not, young lords of the Achaeans! Lo, she that comes from the sea is his mother, with the deathless maidens of the waters, to look on the face of her dead son.' Then the sea nymphs stood around the dead Achilles and clothed him in the garments of the gods, fragrant raiment, and all the nine Muses, one to the other replying with sweet voices, began their lament.

Next the Greeks made a great pile of dry wood and laid Achilles on it and set fire to it, till the flames had consumed his

body except the white ashes. These they placed in a great golden cup and mingled with them the ashes of Patroclus, and above all they built a tomb like a hill, high on a headland above the sea, that men for all time may see it as they go sailing by, and may remember Achilles. Next day they held in his honour foot races and chariot races, and other games, and Thetis gave splendid prizes. Last of all, when the games were ended, Thetis placed before the chiefs the glorious armour that the god had made for her son on the night after the slaying of Patroclus by Hector. ‘Let these arms be the prize of the best of the Greeks,’ she said, ‘and of him that saved the body of Achilles out of the hands of the Trojans.’

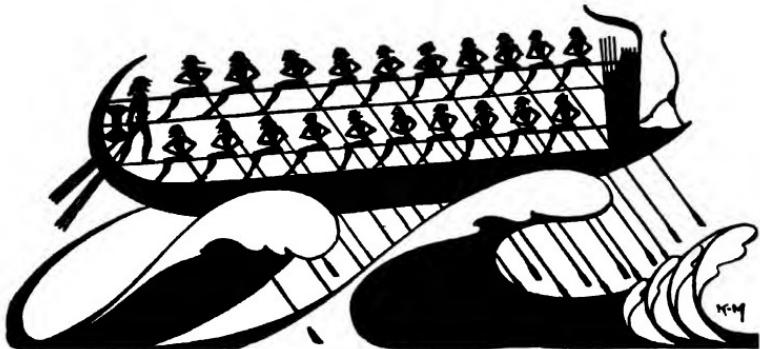
Then stood up on one side Aias and on the other Odysseus, for these two had rescued the body, and neither thought himself a worse warrior than the other. Both were the bravest of the brave; and if Aias was the taller and stronger, and upheld the fight at the ships on the day of the valour of Hector, Odysseus had alone withstood the Trojans, and refused to retreat even when wounded, and his courage and cunning had won for the Greeks the Luck of Troy. Therefore old Nestor arose and said: ‘This is a luckless day, when the best of the Greeks are rivals for such a prize. He who is not the winner will be heavy at heart, and will not stand firm by us in battle as of old, and hence will come great loss to the Greeks. Who can be a just judge in this question, for some men will love Aias better and some will prefer Odysseus, and thus will arise disputes among ourselves. Lo! have we not here among us many Trojan prisoners, waiting till their friends pay their ransom in cattle and gold and bronze and iron? These hate all the Greeks alike, and will favour neither Aias nor Odysseus. Let them be the judges, and decide who is the best of the Greeks, and the man who has done most harm to the Trojans.’

Agamemnon said that Nestor had spoken wisely. The Trojans were then made to sit as judges in the midst of the assembly, and

Aias and Odysseus spoke, and told the stories of their own great deeds, of which we have heard already, but Aias spoke roughly and discourteously, calling Odysseus a coward and a weakling. ‘Perhaps the Trojans know’, said Odysseus quietly, ‘whether they think that I deserve what Aias has said about me, that I am a coward; and perhaps Aias may remember that he did not find me so weak when we wrestled for a prize at the funeral of Patroclus.’

Then the Trojans all with one voice said that Odysseus was the best man among the Greeks, and the most feared by them, both for his courage and his skill in stratagems of war. On this the blood of Aias flew into his face, and he stood silent and unmoving, and could not speak a word, till his friends came round him and led him away to his hut, and there he sat down and would not eat or drink, and the night fell.

Long he sat, musing in his mind, and then rose and put on all his armour, and seized a sword that Hector had given him one day when they two fought in a gentle passage of arms and took courteous farewell of each other, and Aias had given Hector a broad sword-belt, wrought with gold. This sword, Hector’s gift, Aias took, and went towards the hut of Odysseus, meaning to carve him limb from limb, for madness had come upon him in his great grief. Rushing through the night to slay Odysseus he fell upon the flock of sheep that the Greeks kept for their meat. And up and down among them he went smiting blindly till the dawn came, and lo! his senses returned to him and he saw that he had not smitten Odysseus, but stood in a pool of blood among the sheep that he had slain. He could not endure the disgrace of his madness, and he fixed the sword, Hector’s gift, with its hilt firmly in the ground, and went back a little way, and ran and fell upon the sword, which pierced his heart, and so died the great Aias, choosing death before a dishonoured life.



XI

ODYSSEUS SAILS TO SEEK THE SON OF ACHILLES —THE VALOUR OF EURYPYLUS

WHEN the Greeks found Aias lying dead, slain by his own hand, they made great lament, and above all the brother of Aias and his wife Tecmessa bewailed him, and the shores of the sea rang with their sorrow. But of all no man was more grieved than Odysseus, and he stood up and said: ‘Would that the sons of the Trojans had never awarded to me the arms of Achilles, for far rather would I have given them to Aias than that this loss should have befallen the whole army of the Greeks. Let no man blame me or be angry with me, for I have not sought for wealth to enrich myself, but for honour only, and to win a name that will be remembered among men in times to come.’ Then they made a great fire of wood, and burned the body of Aias, lamenting him as they had sorrowed for Achilles.

Now it seemed that though the Greeks had won the Luck of Troy and had defeated the Amazons and the army of Memnon,

they were no nearer taking Troy than ever. They had slain Hector indeed, and many other Trojans, but they had lost the great Achilles and Aias and Patroclus and Antilochus, with the princes whom Penthesilea and Memnon slew, and the bands of the dead chiefs were weary of fighting, and eager to go home. The chiefs met in council, and Menelaus arose and said that his heart was wasted with sorrow for the death of so many brave men who had sailed to Troy for his sake. ‘Would that death had come upon me before I gathered this host,’ he said. ‘But come, let the rest of us launch our swift ships, and return each to our own country.’

He spoke thus to try the Greeks and see of what courage they were, for his desire was still to burn Troy town and to slay Paris with his own hand. Then up rose Diomede and swore that never would the Greeks turn cowards. No! he bade them sharpen their swords and make ready for battle. The prophet Calchas too arose and reminded the Greeks how he had always foretold that they would take Troy in the tenth year of the siege, and how the tenth year had come and victory was almost in their hands. Next Odysseus stood up and said that though Achilles was dead, and there was no prince to lead his men, yet a son had been born to Achilles while he was in the Isle of Scyros, and that son he would bring to fill his father’s place.

‘Surely he will come, and for a token I will carry to him those unhappy arms of the great Achilles. Unworthy am I to wear them, and they bring back to my mind our sorrow for Aias. But his son will wear them in the front of the spearmen of Greece and in the thickest ranks of Troy shall the helmet of Achilles shine, as it was wont to do, for always he fought among the foremost.’ Thus Odysseus spoke, and he and Diomede with fifty oarsmen went on board a swift ship, and sitting all in order on the benches they smote the grey sea into foam, and Odysseus held the helm and steered them towards the Isle of Scyros.

Now the Trojans had rest from war for a while, and Priam with a heavy heart bade men take his chief treasure, the great golden vine, with leaves and clusters of gold, and carry it to the mother of Eurypylus, the king of the people who dwell where the wide marshlands of the River Caycus clang with the cries of the cranes and herons and wild swans. For the mother of Eurypylus had sworn that never would she let her son go to the war unless Priam sent her the vine of gold, a gift of the gods to an ancient king of Troy.

With a heavy heart then Priam sent the golden vine, but Eurypylus was glad when he saw it, and bade all his men arm and harness the horses to the chariots, and glad were the Trojans when the long line of the new army wound along the road and into the town. Then Paris welcomed Eurypylus who was his nephew, son of his sister Astyoche, a daughter of Priam; but the grandfather of Eurypylus was the famous Heracles, the strongest man who ever lived on earth. So Paris brought Eurypylus to his house, where Helen sat working at her embroideries with her four bower maidens, and Eurypylus marvelled when he saw her, she was so beautiful. But the Khita, the people of Eurypylus, feasted in the open air among the Trojans, by the light of great fires burning, and to the music of pipes and flutes. The Greeks saw the fires and heard the merry music, and they watched all night lest the Trojans should attack the ships before the dawn. But in the dawn Eurypylus rose from sleep and put on his armour, and hung from his neck by the belt the great shield on which were fashioned, in gold of many colours and in silver, the Twelve Adventures of Heracles, his grandfather—strange deeds that he did, fighting with monsters and giants and with the Hound of Hades, who guards the dwellings of the dead. Then Eurypylus led on his whole army, and with the brothers of Hector he charged against the Greeks, who were led by Agamemnon.

In that battle Eurypylus first smote Nireus, who was the most beautiful of the Greeks now that Achilles had fallen. There lay Nireus, like an apple tree, all covered with blossoms red and white, that the wind has overthrown in a rich man's orchard. Then Eurypylus would have stripped off his armour, but Machaon rushed in—Machaon who had been wounded and taken to the tent of Nestor on the day of the valour of Hector, when he brought fire against the ships. Machaon drove his spear through the left shoulder of Eurypylus, but Eurypylus struck at his shoulder with his sword, and the blood flowed; nevertheless Machaon stooped and grasped a great stone, and sent it against the helmet of Eurypylus. He was shaken, but he did not fall; he drove his spear through breastplate and breast of Machaon, who fell and died. With his last breath he said: 'Thou too shalt fall,' but Eurypylus made answer: 'So let it be! Men cannot live for ever, and such is the fortune of war.'

Thus the battle rang and shone and shifted, till few of the Greeks kept steadfast, except those with Menelaus and Agamemnon, for Diomede and Odysseus were far away upon the sea, bringing from Scyros the son of Achilles. But Teucer slew Polydamas, who had warned Hector to come within the walls of Troy; and Menelaus wounded Deiphobus, the bravest of the sons of Priam who were still in arms, for many had fallen; and Agamemnon slew certain spearmen of the Trojans. Round Eurypylus fought Paris and Aeneas, who wounded Teucer with a great stone, breaking in his helmet, but he drove back in his chariot to the ships. Menelaus and Agamemnon stood alone and fought in the crowd of Trojans, like two wild boars that a circle of hunters surrounds with spears, so fiercely they stood at bay. There they would both have fallen, but Idomeneus and Meriones of Crete and Thrasymedes, Nestor's son, ran to their rescue, and fiercer grew the fighting. Eurypylus desired to slay Agamemnon



See page 86

THERE THEY FOUND HIS MOTHER, BEAUTIFUL DEIDAMIA,
IN MOURNING RAIMENT

and Menelaus, and end the war, but as the spears of the Scots encompassed King James at Flodden Field till he ran forward, and fell within a lance's length of the English general, so the men of Crete and Pylos guarded the two princes with their spears.

There Paris was wounded in the thigh with a spear, and he retreated a little way and showered his arrows among the Greeks; and Idomeneus lifted and hurled a great stone at Eurypylus which struck his spear out of his hand, and he went back to find it, and Menelaus and Agamemnon had a breathing space in the battle. But soon Eurypylus returned, crying on his men, and they drove back foot by foot the ring of spears round Agamemnon, and Aeneas and Paris slew men of Crete and of Mycenae till the Greeks were pushed to the ditch round the camp; and then great stones and spears and arrows rained down on the Trojans and the people of Eurypylus from the battlements and towers of the Grecian wall. Now night fell, and Eurypylus knew that he could not win the wall in the dark, so he withdrew his men, and they built great fires and camped upon the plain.

The case of the Greeks was now like that of the Trojans after the death of Hector. They buried Machaon and the other chiefs who had fallen, and they remained within their ditch and their wall, for they dared not come out into the open plain. They knew not whether Odysseus and Diomede had come safely to Scyros, or whether their ship had been wrecked or driven into unknown seas. So they sent a herald to Eurypylus, asking for a truce, that they might gather their dead and burn them, and the Trojans and Khita also buried their dead.

Meanwhile the swift ship of Odysseus had swept through the sea to Scyros and to the palace of King Lycomedes. There they found Neoptolemus, the son of Achilles, in the court before the doors. He was as tall as his father, and very like him in face and shape, and he was practising the throwing of the spear at a mark.

Right glad were Odysseus and Diomede to behold him, and Odysseus told Neoptolemus who they were, and why they came, and implored him to take pity on the Greeks and help them.

'My friend is Diomede, Prince of Argos,' said Odysseus, 'and I am Odysseus of Ithaca. Come with us, and we Greeks will give you countless gifts, and I myself will present you with the armour of your father, such as it is not lawful for any other mortal man to wear, seeing that it is golden, and wrought by the hands of a god. Moreover, when we have taken Troy and gone home, Menelaus will give you his daughter, the beautiful Hermione, to be your wife, with gold in great plenty.'

Then Neoptolemus answered: 'It is enough that the Greeks need my sword. Tomorrow we shall sail for Troy.' He led them into the palace to dine, and there they found his mother, beautiful Deidamia, in mourning raiment, and she wept when she heard that they had come to take her son away. But Neoptolemus comforted her, promising to return safely with the spoils of Troy, 'or even if I fall,' he said, 'it will be after doing deeds worthy of my father's name.' So next day they sailed, leaving Deidamia mournful, like a swallow whose nest a serpent has found and has killed her young ones; even so she wailed, and went up and down in the house. But the ship ran swiftly on her way, cleaving the dark waves till Odysseus showed Neoptolemus the far-off snowy crest of Mount Ida, and Tenedos, the island near Troy; and they passed the plain where the tomb of Achilles stands, but Odysseus did not tell the son that it was his father's tomb.

Now all this time the Greeks, shut up within their wall and fighting from their towers, were looking back across the sea, eager to spy the ship of Odysseus, like men wrecked on a desert island, who keep watch every day for a sail afar off, hoping that the seamen will touch at their isle and have pity upon them and

carry them home; so the Greeks kept watch for the ship bearing Neoptolemus.

Diomede too had been watching the shore, and when they came in sight of the ships of the Greeks, he saw that they were being besieged by the Trojans, and that all the Greek army was penned up within the wall, and was fighting from the towers. Then he cried aloud to Odysseus and Neoptolemus: 'Make haste, friends, let us arm before we land, for some great evil has fallen upon the Greeks. The Trojans are attacking our wall, and soon they will burn our ships, and for us there will be no return.'

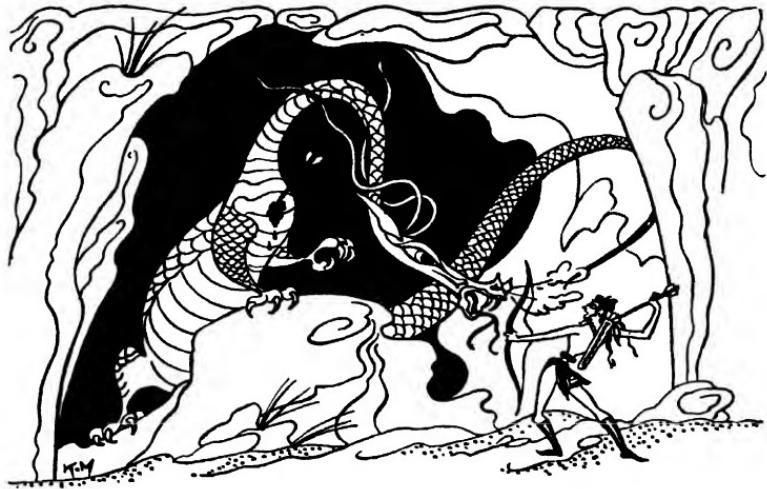
Then all the men on the ship of Odysseus armed themselves, and Neoptolemus, in the splendid armour of his father, was the first to leap ashore. The Greeks could not come from the wall to welcome him, for they were fighting hard and hand-to-hand with Eurypylus and his men. But they glanced back over their shoulders and it seemed to them that they saw Achilles himself, spear and sword in hand, rushing to help them. They raised a great battle-cry, and, when Neoptolemus reached the battlements, he and Odysseus and Diomede leaped down to the plain, the Greeks following them, and they all charged at once on the men of Eurypylus, with levelled spears, and drove them from the wall.

Then the Trojans trembled, for they knew the shields of Diomede and Odysseus, and they thought that the tall chief in the armour of Achilles was Achilles himself, come back from the land of the dead to take vengeance for Antilochus. The Trojans fled and gathered round Eurypylus, as in a thunderstorm little children, afraid of the lightning and the noise, run and cluster round their father, and hide their faces on his knees.

But Neoptolemus was spearing the Trojans, as a man who carries at night a beacon of fire in his boat on the sea spears the fishes that flock around, drawn by the blaze of the flame. Cruelly he avenged his father's death on many a Trojan, and the men

whom Achilles had led followed Achilles' son, slaying to right and left and smiting the Trojans as they ran between the shoulders with the spear. Thus they fought and followed while daylight lasted, but when night fell they led Neoptolemus to his father's hut, where the women washed him in the bath, and then he was taken to feast with Agamemnon and Menelaus and the princes. They all welcomed him and gave him glorious gifts—swords with silver hilts and cups of gold and silver; and they were glad, for they had driven the Trojans from their wall, and hoped that tomorrow they would slay Eurypylus and take Troy town.

But their hope was not to be fulfilled, for though next day Eurypylus met Neoptolemus in the battle, and was slain by him, when the Greeks chased the Trojans into their city so great a storm of lightning and thunder and rain fell upon them that they retreated again to their camp. They believed that Zeus, the chief of the gods, was angry with them; and the days went by and Troy still stood unconquered.



XII

THE SLAYING OF PARIS

WHEN the Greeks were disheartened, as they often were, they consulted Calchas the prophet. He usually found that they must do something or send for somebody, and in doing so they diverted their minds from their many misfortunes. Now as the Trojans were fighting more bravely than before, under Deiphobus—a brother of Hector—the Greeks went to Calchas for advice, and he told them that they must send Odysseus and Diomede to bring Philoctetes the Bowman from the isle of Lemnos. This was an unhappy deserted island, in which the married women, some years before, had murdered all their husbands, out of jealousy, in a single night. The Greeks had landed in Lemnos, on their way to Troy, and there Philoctetes

had shot an arrow at a great water dragon which lived in a well within a cave in the lonely hills. But when he entered the cave the dragon bit him, and though he killed it at last, its poisonous teeth wounded his foot. The wound never healed, but dripped with venom, and Philoctetes in terrible pain kept all the camp awake at night by his cries.

The Greeks were sorry for him, but he was not a pleasant companion, shrieking as he did and exuding poison wherever he came. So they left him on the lonely island, and did not know whether he was alive or dead. Calchas ought to have told the Greeks not to desert Philoctetes at the time, if he was so important that Troy, as the prophet now said, could not be taken without him. But now, as he must give some advice, Calchas said that Philoctetes must be brought back, so Odysseus and Diomede went to bring him. They sailed to Lemnos, a melancholy place they found it, with no smoke rising from the ruinous houses along the shore. As they were landing they learned that Philoctetes was not dead, for his dismal old cries of pain, *ototototoi, ai, ai; pheu, pheu; ototototoi*, came echoing from a cave on the beach. To this cave the princes went, and found a terrible-looking man, with long, dirty, dry hair and beard ; he was worn to a skeleton, with hollow eyes, and lay moaning in a mass of the feathers of sea birds. His great bow and his arrows lay ready to his hand : with these he used to shoot the sea birds, which were all that he had to eat, and their feathers littered all the floor of his cave, and they were none the better for the poison that dripped from his wounded foot.

When this horrible creature saw Odysseus and Diomede coming near, he seized his bow and fitted a poisonous arrow to the string, for he hated the Greeks, because they had left him in the desert isle. But the princes held up their hands in sign of peace and cried out that they had come to do him kindness, so he laid down

his bow, and they came in and sat on the rocks, and promised that his wound should be healed, for the Greeks were very much ashamed of having deserted him. It was difficult to resist Odysseus when he wished to persuade anyone, and at last Philoctetes consented to sail with them to Troy. The oarsmen carried him down to the ship on a litter, and there his dreadful wound was washed with warm water, and oil was poured into it, and it was bound up with soft linen, so that his pain grew less fierce; and they gave him a good supper and wine enough, which he had not tasted for many years.

Next morning they sailed, and had a fair west wind, so that they soon landed among the Greeks and carried Philoctetes on shore. Here Podaleirius, the brother of Machaon, being a physician, did all that could be done to heal the wound, and the pain left Philoctetes. He was taken to the hut of Agamemnon, who welcomed him and said that the Greeks repented of their cruelty. They gave him seven female slaves to take care of him and twenty swift horses and twelve great vessels of bronze, and told him that he was always to live with the greatest chiefs and feed at their table. So he was bathed and his hair was cut and combed and anointed with oil, and soon he was eager and ready to fight and to use his great bow and poisoned arrows on the Trojans. The use of poisoned arrow-tips was thought unfair, but Philoctetes had no scruples.

Now in the next battle Paris was shooting down the Greeks with his arrows, when Philoctetes saw him and cried: 'Dog, you are proud of your archery and of the arrow that slew the great Achilles. But behold, I am a better Bowman than you by far, and the bow in my hands was borne by the strong man Heracles!' So he cried and drew the bowstring to his breast and the poisoned arrow-head to the bow, and the bowstring rang and the arrow flew and did but graze the hand of Paris. Then the bitter pain of

the poison came upon him, and the Trojans carried him into their city, where the physicians tended him all night. But he never slept and lay tossing in agony till dawn, when he said: 'There is but one hope. Take me to Oenone, the nymph of Mount Ida!'

Then his friends laid Paris on a litter and bore him up the steep path to Mount Ida. Often had he climbed it swiftly when he was young, and went to see the nymph who loved him; but for many a day he had not trod the path where he was now carried in great pain and fear, for the poison turned his blood to fire. Little hope he had, for he knew how cruelly he had deserted Oenone, and he saw that all the birds which were disturbed in the wood flew away to the left hand, an omen of evil.

At last the bearers reached the cave where the nymph Oenone lived, and they smelled the sweet fragrance of the cedar fire that burned on the floor of the cave, and they heard the nymph singing a melancholy song. Then Paris called to her in the voice which she had once loved to hear, and she grew very pale and rose up, saying to herself: 'The day has come for which I have prayed. He is sore hurt, and has come to bid me heal his wound.' So she came and stood in the doorway of the dark cave, white against the darkness; and the bearers laid Paris on the litter at the feet of Oenone, and he stretched forth his hands to touch her knees, as was the manner of suppliants. But she drew back and gathered her robe about her, that he might not touch it with his hands.

Then he said: 'Lady, despise me not and hate me not, for my pain is more than I can bear. Truly it was by no will of mine that I left you lonely here, for the Fates that no man may escape led me to Helen. Would that I had died in your arms before I saw her face! But now I beseech you in the name of the gods, and for the memory of our love, that you will have pity on me and heal my hurt, and not refuse your grace and let me die here at your feet.'

Then Oenone answered scornfully: 'Why have you come here

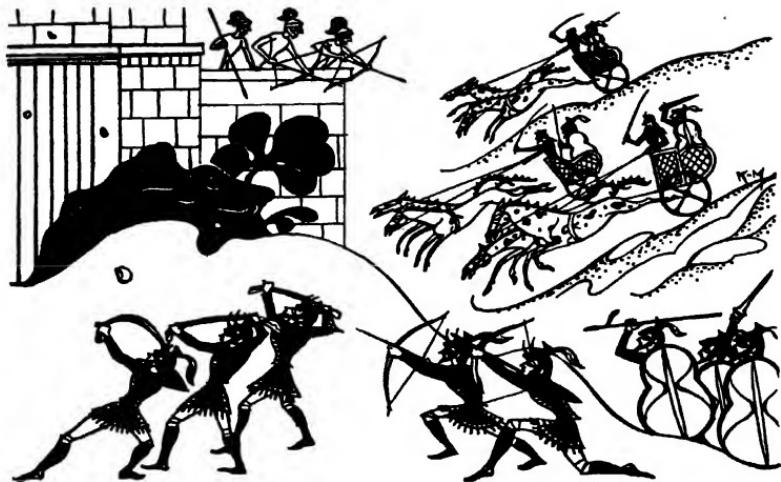
to me? Surely for years you have not come this way, where the path was once worn with your feet. But long ago you left me lonely and lamenting for the love of Helen of the fair hands. Surely she is much more beautiful than the love of your youth, and far more able to help you, for men say that she can never know old age and death. Go home to Helen and let her take away your pain.'

Thus Oenone spoke and went within the cave, where she threw herself down among the ashes of the hearth and sobbed for anger and sorrow. In a little while she rose and went to the door of the cave, thinking that Paris had not been borne back to Troy, but she found him not, for his bearers had carried him by another path, till he died beneath the boughs of the oak trees. Then his bearers carried him swiftly down to Troy, where his mother bewailed him and Helen sang over him as she had sung over Hector, remembering many things, and fearing to think of what her own end might be. But the Trojans hastily built a great pile of dry wood and thereon laid the body of Paris and set fire to it, and the flame went up through the darkness, for now night had fallen.

But Oenone was roaming in the dark woods, crying and calling after Paris, like a lioness whose cubs the hunters have carried away. The moon rose to give her light, and the flame of the funeral fire shone against the sky, and then Oenone knew that Paris had died—beautiful Paris—and that the Trojans were burning his body on the plain at the foot of Mount Ida. Then she cried that now Paris was all her own, and that Helen had no more hold on him. 'And though when he was living he left me, in death we shall not be divided,' she said, and she sped down the hill and through the thickets where the wood nymphs were wailing for Paris, and she reached the plain, and, covering her head with her veil like a bride, she rushed through the throng of Trojans. She leaped upon the burning pile of wood, she clasped the body of

Paris in her arms, and the flame of fire consumed the bridegroom and the bride, and their ashes mingled. No man could divide them any more, and the ashes were placed in a golden cup, within a chamber of stone, and the earth was mounded above them. On that grave the wood nymphs planted two rose trees, and their branches met and plaited together.

This was the end of Paris and Oenone.



XIII

HOW ODYSSEUS INVENTED THE DEVICE OF THE HORSE OF TREE

AFTER Paris died Helen was not given back to Menelaus. We are often told that only fear of the anger of Paris had prevented the Trojans from surrendering Helen and making peace. Now Paris could not terrify them; yet for all that the men of the town would not part with Helen, whether because she was so beautiful, or because they thought it dishonourable to yield her to the Greeks, who might put her to a cruel death. So Helen was taken by Deiphobus, the brother of Paris, to live in his own house, and Deiphobus was at this time the best warrior and the chief captain of the men of Troy.

Meanwhile the Greeks made an assault against the Trojan walls

and fought long and hardily; but being safe behind the battlements, and shooting through loopholes, the Trojans drove them back with loss of many of their men. It was in vain that Philoctetes shot his poisoned arrows; they fell back from the stone walls, or stuck in the palisades of wood above the walls, and the Greeks who tried to climb over were speared or crushed with heavy stones. When night fell they retreated to the ships and held a council, and as usual they asked the advice of the prophet Calchas. It was the business of Calchas to go about looking at birds and taking omens from what he saw them doing, a way of prophesying which the Romans also used, and some savages do the same to this day. Calchas said that yesterday he had seen a hawk pursuing a dove, which hid herself in a hole in a rocky cliff. For a long while the hawk tried to find the hole, and follow the dove into it, but he could not reach her. So he flew away for a short distance and hid himself; then the dove fluttered out into the sunlight, and the hawk swooped on her and killed her.

The Greeks, said Calchas, ought to learn a lesson from the hawk, and take Troy by cunning, as by force they could do nothing. Then Odysseus stood up and described a trick which it is not easy to understand. The Greeks, he said, ought to make an enormous hollow horse of wood, and place the bravest men in the horse. Then all the rest of the Greeks should embark in their ships and sail to the Isle of Tenedos and lie hidden behind the island. The Trojans would then come out of the city like the dove out of her hole in the rock, and would wander about the Greek camp, and wonder why the great horse of tree had been made and why it had been left behind. Lest they should set fire to the horse, when they would soon have found out the warriors hidden in it, a cunning Greek, whom the Trojans did not know by sight, should be left in the camp or near it. He would tell the Trojans that the Greeks had given up all hope and gone home, and he was

to say that they feared the goddess Pallas was angry with them, because they had stolen her image that fell from heaven and was called the Luck of Troy. To soothe Pallas and prevent her from sending great storms against the ships, the Greeks (so the man was to say) had built this wooden horse as an offering to the goddess. The Trojans, believing this story, would drag the horse into Troy, and in the night the princes would come out, set fire to the city and open the gates to the army, which would return from Tenedos as soon as darkness came on.

The prophet was much pleased with the plan of Odysseus, and as two birds happened to fly away on the right hand, he declared that the stratagem would certainly be lucky. Neoptolemus, on the other hand, voted for taking Troy, without any trick, by sheer hard fighting. Odysseus replied that if Achilles could not do that, it could not be done at all, and that Epeius, a famous carpenter, had better set about making the horse at once.

Next day half the army, with axes in their hands, were sent to cut down trees on Mount Ida, and thousands of planks were cut from the trees by Epeius and his workmen, and in three days he had finished the horse. Odysseus then asked the best of the Greeks to come forward and go inside the machine, while one, whom the Trojans did not know by sight, should volunteer to stay behind in the camp and deceive the enemy. Then a young man called Sinon stood up and said that he would risk himself and take the chance that the Trojans might disbelieve him and burn him alive. Certainly none of the Greeks did anything more courageous, yet Sinon had not been considered brave. Had he fought in the front ranks the Trojans would have known him; but there were many brave fighters who would not have dared to do what Sinon undertook.

Then old Nestor was the first that volunteered to go into the horse; but Neoptolemus said that, brave as he was, he was too old,

and that he must depart with the army to Tenedos. Neoptolemus himself would go into the horse, for he would rather die than turn his back on Troy. So Neoptolemus armed himself and climbed into the horse, as did Menelaus, Odysseus, Diomedes, Thrasy-medes (Nestor's son), Idomeneus, Philoctetes, Meriones and all the best men except Agamemnon, while Epeius himself entered last of all. Agamemnon was not allowed by the other Greeks to share their adventure, as he was to command the army when they returned from Tenedos. They meanwhile launched their ships and sailed away.

But first Menelaus had led Odysseus apart, and told him that if they took Troy (and now they must either take it or die at the hands of the Trojans), he would owe to Odysseus the glory. When they came back to Greece, he wished to give Odysseus one of his own cities, that they might always be near each other. Odysseus smiled and shook his head; he could not leave Ithaca, his own rough island kingdom. ‘But if we both live through the night that is coming,’ he said, ‘I may ask you for one gift, and giving it will make you none the poorer.’ Then Menelaus swore by the splendour of Zeus that Odysseus could ask him for no gift that he would not gladly give; so they embraced, and both armed themselves and went up into the horse. With them were all the chiefs except Nestor, whom they would not allow to come, and Agamemnon, who as chief general had to command the army. They swathed themselves and their arms in soft silks, that they might not ring and clash, when the Trojans, if they were so foolish, dragged the horse up into their town; and there they sat in the dark waiting. Meanwhile the army burned their huts and launched their ships, and with oars and sails made their way to the back of the Isle of Tenedos.

THE END OF TROY AND THE SAVING OF HELEN

FROM the walls the Trojans saw the black smoke go up thick into the sky, and the whole fleet of the Greeks sailing out to sea. Never were men so glad, and they armed themselves for fear of an ambush and went cautiously, sending forth scouts in front of them, down to the seashore. Here they found the huts burned down and the camp deserted, and some of the scouts also caught Sinon, who had hid himself in a place where he was likely to be found. They rushed on him with fierce cries and bound his hands with a rope, and kicked and dragged him along to the place where Priam and the princes were wondering at the great horse of tree. Sinon looked round upon them, while some were saying that he ought to be tortured with fire to make him tell all the truth about the horse. The chiefs in the horse must have trembled for fear lest torture should wring the truth out of Sinon; for then the Trojans would simply burn the machine and them within it.

But Sinon said: 'Miserable man that I am, whom the Greeks hate and the Trojans are eager to slay!' When the Trojans heard that the Greeks hated him they were curious, and asked who he was, and how he came to be there. 'I will tell you all, O King!' he answered Priam. 'I was a friend and squire of an unhappy chief, Palamedes, whom the wicked Odysseus hated and slew secretly one day, when he found him alone, fishing in the sea. I was angry, and in my folly I did not hide my anger, and my words came to the ears of Odysseus. From that hour he sought occasion to slay me. Then Calchas——' Here he stopped, saying: 'But why tell a

long tale? If you hate all Greeks alike then slay me; this is what, Agamemnon and Odysseus desire; Menelaus would thank you for my head.'

The Trojans were now more curious than before. They bade him go on, and he said that the Greeks had consulted an Oracle, which advised them to sacrifice one of their army to appease the anger of the gods and gain a fair wind homewards. 'But who was to be sacrificed? They asked Calchas, who for fifteen days refused to speak. At last, being bribed by Odysseus, he pointed to me, Sinon, and said that I must be the victim. I was bound and kept in prison while they built their great horse as a present for Pallas Athene the goddess. They made it so large that you Trojans might never be able to drag it into your city; while if you destroyed it the goddess might turn her anger against you. And now they have gone home to bring back the image that fell from heaven, which they had sent to Greece, and to restore it to the temple of Pallas Athene, when they have taken your town, for the goddess is angry with them for that theft of Odysseus.'

The Trojans were foolish enough to believe the story of Sinon, and they pitied him and unbound his hands. Then they tied ropes to the wooden horse, and laid rollers in front of it, like men launching a ship, and they all took turns to drag the horse up to the Scaean gate. Children and women put their hands to the ropes and hauled, and with shouts and dances and hymns they toiled, till about nightfall the horse stood in the courtyard of the inmost castle.

Then all the people of Troy began to dance and drink and sing. Such sentinels as were set at the gates got as drunk as all the rest, who danced about the city till after midnight, and then they went to their homes and slept heavily.

Meanwhile the Greek ships were returning from behind Tenedos as fast as the oarsmen could row them.

One Trojan did not drink or sleep; this was Deiphobus, at whose house Helen was now living. He bade her come with them, for he knew that she was able to speak in the very voice of all men and women whom she had ever seen, and he armed a few of his friends and went with them to the citadel. Then he stood beside the horse, holding Helen's hand, and whispered that she must call each of the chiefs in the voice of his wife. She was obliged to obey, and she called Menelaus in her own voice, and Diomede in the voice of his wife, and Odysseus in the very voice of Penelope. Then Menelaus and Diomede were eager to answer, but Odysseus grasped their hands and whispered the word 'Echo!' Then they remembered that this was a name for Helen, because she could speak in all voices, and they were silent; but Anticlus was still eager to answer, till Odysseus held his strong hand over his mouth. There was only silence, and Deiphobus led Helen back to his house. When they had gone away Epeius opened the side of the horse, and all the chiefs let themselves down softly to the ground. Some rushed to the gate to open it, and they killed the sleeping sentinels and let in the Greeks. Others sped with torches to burn the houses of the Trojan princes, and terrible was the slaughter of men, unarmed and half awake, and loud were the cries of the women. But Odysseus had slipped away at the first, none knew where. Neoptolemus ran to the palace of Priam, who was sitting at the altar in his courtyard, praying vainly to the gods, for Neoptolemus slew the old man cruelly, and his white hair was dabbled in his blood. All through the city was fighting and slaying; but Menelaus went to the house of Deiphobus, knowing that Helen was there.

In the doorway he found Deiphobus lying dead in all his armour, a spear standing in his breast. There were footprints marked in blood, leading through the portico and into the hall. There Menelaus went, and found Odysseus leaning, wounded,



against one of the central pillars of the great chamber, the firelight shining on his armour.

'Why hast thou slain Deiphobus and robbed me of my revenge?' said Menelaus.

'You swore to give me a gift,' said Odysseus. 'And will you keep your oath?'

'Ask what you will,' said Menelaus, 'it is yours and my oath cannot be broken.'

'I ask the life of Helen of the fair hands,' said Odysseus. 'This is my own life-price that I pay back to her, for she saved my life when I took the Luck of Troy, and I swore that hers should be saved.'

Then Helen stole, glimmering in white robes, from a recess in the dark hall, and fell at the feet of Menelaus; her golden hair lay in the dust of the hearth, and her hands moved to touch his knees. His drawn sword fell from the hands of Menelaus, and pity and love came into his heart, and he raised her from the dust and her white arms were round his neck, and they both wept. That night

Menelaus fought no more, but they tended the wound of Odysseus, for the sword of Deiphobus had bitten through his helmet.

When dawn came Troy lay in ashes, and the women were being driven with spear shafts to the ships, and the men were left unburied, a prey to dogs and all manner of birds. Thus the grey city fell, that had lorded it for many centuries. All the gold and silver and rich embroideries, and ivory and amber, the horses and chariots, were divided among the army—all but a treasure of silver and gold, hidden in a chest within a hollow of the wall. And this treasure was found, not very many years ago, by men digging deep on the hill where Troy once stood. The women too were given to the princes, and Neoptolemus took Andromache to his home in Argos, to draw water from the well and to be the slave of a master, and Agamemnon carried beautiful Cassandra, the daughter of Priam, to his palace in Mycenae, where they were both slain in one night. Only Helen was led with honour to the ship of Menelaus.



PART II

THE WANDERINGS OF ODYSSEUS



I

THE SLAYING OF AGAMEMNON AND THE SORROWS OF ODYSSEUS

THE Greeks left Troy a mass of smouldering ashes; the marks of fire are still to be seen in the ruins on the hill which is now called Hissarlik. The Greeks had many troubles on their way home, and years passed before some of the chiefs reached their own cities. As for Agamemnon, while he was at Troy his wife, Clytaemnestra, the sister of Helen, had fallen in love with a young man named Aegisthus, who wished to be king, so he married Clytaemnestra, just as if Agamemnon had been

dead. Meanwhile Agamemnon was sailing home with his share of the wealth of Troy, and many a storm drove him out of his course. At last he reached the harbour, about seven miles from his city of Mycenae, and he kissed the earth when he landed, thinking that all his troubles were over and that he would find his son and daughter, Orestes and Electra, grown up, and his wife happy because of his return.

But Aegisthus had set, a year before, a watchman on a high tower, to come with the news as soon as Agamemnon landed, and the watchman ran to Mycenae with the good news. Aegisthus placed twenty armed men in a hidden place in the great hall, and then he shouted for his chariots and horses and drove down to meet Agamemnon and welcome him and carry him to his own palace. Then he gave a great feast, and when men had drunk much wine, the armed men, who had been hiding behind curtains, rushed out, with sword and spear, and fell on Agamemnon and his company. Though taken by surprise they drew their swords and fought so well for their lives that none were left alive, not one, neither of the company of Agamemnon nor of the company of Aegisthus; they were all slain in the hall except Aegisthus, who had hidden himself when the fray began. The bodies lay round the great mixing bowl of wine and about the tables, and the floor ran with blood. Before Agamemnon died he saw Clytaemnestra herself stab Cassandra, the daughter of Priam, whom he had brought from Troy.

In the town of Agamemnon, Mycenae, deep down in the earth, have been found five graves, with bones of men and women, and these bones were all covered with beautiful ornaments of gold, hundreds of them, and swords and daggers inlaid with gold and golden cups, and a sceptre of gold and crystal, and two gold breastplates. There were also golden masks that had been made to cover the faces of the dead kings, and who knows but that one

of these masks may show us the features of the famous Agamemnon?

Odysseus of course knew nothing about these murders at the time, for he was being borne by the winds into undiscovered seas. But later he heard all the story from the ghost of a dead prophet, in the Land of the Dead, and he determined to be very cautious if ever he reached his own island, for who knew what the young men might do that had grown up since he sailed to Troy?

Of the other Greeks Nestor soon and safely arrived at his town of Pylos, but Menelaus and Helen were borne by the winds to Egypt and other strange countries, and Calchas the prophet died on land, on his way across Greece.

When Odysseus left Troy the wind carried him to the coast of Thrace, where the people were allies of the Trojans. It was a king of the Thracians that Diomede killed when he and Odysseus stole into the camp of the Trojans in the night, and drove away the white horses of the king, as swift as the winds. Ismarus was the name of the Thracian town where Odysseus landed, and his men took it and plundered it, yet Odysseus allowed no one to harm Maron, the priest of Apollo, but protected him and his wife and child, in their house within the holy grove of the god. Maron was grateful and gave Odysseus twelve talents, or little wedges, of gold, and a great bowl of silver, and twelve large clay jars as big as barrels, full of the best and strongest wine. It was so strong that men put into the mixing bowl but one measure of wine to twenty measures of water. These presents Odysseus stored up in his ship, and lucky for him it was that he was kind to Maron.

Meanwhile his men, instead of leaving the town with their plunder, sat eating and drinking till dawn. By that time the people of the town had warned their neighbours in the country farms, who all came down in full armour, and attacked the men of Odysseus. In this fight he lost seventy-two men, six from each

of his twelve ships, and it was only by hard fighting that the others were able to get on board their ships and sail away.

A great storm arose and beat upon the ships, and it seems that Odysseus and his men were driven into Fairyland, where they remained for ten years. We have heard that King Arthur and Thomas the Rhymer were carried into Fairyland, but what adventures they met with there we do not know. About Odysseus we have the stories which are now to be told. For ten days his ships ran due south, and on the tenth they reached the land of the Lotus Eaters, who eat food of flowers. They went on shore and drew water, and three men were sent to try to find the people of that country, who were a quiet, friendly people, and gave the fruit of the lotus to the strange sailors. Now whoever tastes of that fruit has no mind ever to go home, but to sit between the setting sun and the rising moon, dreaming happy dreams and forgetting the world. The three men ate the lotus and sat down to dream, but Odysseus went after them and drove them to the ships, and bound their hands and feet and threw them on board, and sailed away. Then he with his ships reached the coast of the land of the Cyclopes, which means the round-eyed men, men with only one eye apiece, set in the middle of their foreheads. They lived not in houses, but in caves among the hills, and they had no king and no laws, and did not plough or sow, but wheat and vines grew wild, and they kept great flocks of sheep.

There was a beautiful wild desert island lying across the opening of a bay; the isle was full of wild goats, and made a bar against the waves, so that ships could lie behind it safely and run up on the beach, for there was no tide in that sea. There Odysseus ran up his ships, and the men passed the time in hunting wild goats, and feasting on fresh meat and the wine of Maron, the priest of Apollo. Next day Odysseus left all the ships and men there, except his own ships and his own crew, and went to see

what kind of people lived on the mainland, for as yet none had been seen. He found a large cave close to the sea, with laurels growing on the rocky roof, and a wall of rough stones built round a court in front. Odysseus left all his men but twelve with the ship, filled a goatskin with the strong wine of Maron, put some corn flour in a sack and went up to the cave. Nobody was there, but there were all the things that are usually in a dairy: baskets full of cheese, pails and bowls full of milk and whey, and kids and lambs were playing in their folds.

All seemed very quiet and pleasant. The men wanted to take as much cheese as they could carry back to the ship, but Odysseus wished to see the owner of the cave. His men, making themselves at home, lit a fire, and toasted and ate the cheeses, far within the cave. Then a shadow thrown by the setting sun fell across the opening of the cave, and a monstrous man entered and threw down a dry trunk of a tree that he carried for firewood. Next he drove in the ewes of his flock, leaving the rams in the yard, and he picked up a huge flat stone, and set it so as to make a shut door to the cave, for twenty-four yoke of horses could not have dragged away that stone. Lastly the man milked his ewes, and put the milk in pails to drink at supper. All this while Odysseus and his men sat quiet and in great fear, for they were shut up in a cave with a one-eyed giant, whose cheese they had been eating.

Then the giant, when he had lit the fire, happened to see the men, and asked them who they were. Odysseus said that they were Greeks, who had taken Troy, and were wandering lost on the seas, and he asked the man to be kind to them in the name of their chief god, Zeus.

'We Cyclopes', said the giant, 'do not care for Zeus or the gods, for we think that we are better men than they. Where is your ship?' Odysseus answered that it had been wrecked on the coast, to which the man made no answer, but snatched up two of

the twelve, knocked out their brains on the floor, tore the bodies limb from limb, roasted them at his fire, ate them, and after drinking many pailfuls of milk lay down and fell asleep. Now Odysseus had a mind to drive his sword-point into the giant's liver, and he felt for the place with his hand. But he remembered that even if he killed the giant he could not move the huge stone that was the door of the cave, so he and his men would die of hunger when they had eaten all the cheeses.

In the morning the giant ate two more men for breakfast, drove out his ewes, and set the great stone in the doorway again, as lightly as a man would put a quiverlid on a quiver of arrows. Then away he went, driving his flock to graze on the green hills.

Odysseus did not give way to despair. The giant had left his stick in the cave : it was as large as the mast of a great ship. From this Odysseus cut a portion six feet long, and his men cut and rubbed as if they were making a spear shaft : Odysseus then sharpened it to a point, and hardened the point in the fire. It was a thick rounded bar of wood, and the men cast lots to choose four who should twist the bar in the giant's eye when he fell asleep at night. Back he came at sunset and drove his flocks into the cave, rams and all. Then he put up his stone door, milked his ewes and killed two men and cooked them.

Odysseus meanwhile had filled one of the wooden ivy bowls full of the strong wine of Maron, without putting a drop of water into it. This bowl he offered to the giant, who had never heard of wine. He drank one bowl after another, and when he was merry he said that he would make Odysseus a present. 'What is your name?' he asked.

'My name is *Nobody*,' said Odysseus.

'Then I shall eat the others first and *Nobody* last,' said the giant. 'That shall be your gift.' Then he fell asleep.

Odysseus took his bar of wood, and made the point red hot in

the fire. Next his four men rammed it into the giant's one eye, and held it down, while Odysseus twirled it round, and the eye hissed like red-hot iron when men dip it into cold water, which is the strength of iron. The Cyclops roared and leaped to his feet, and shouted for help to the other giants who lived in the neighbouring caves.

'Who is troubling you, Polyphemus?' they answered. 'Why do you wake us out of our sleep?'

The giant answered: 'Nobody is killing me by his cunning, not at all in fair fight.'

'Then if nobody is harming you nobody can help you!' shouted a giant. 'If you are ill pray to your father Poseidon, who is the God of the Sea.'

So the giants all went back to bed, and Odysseus laughed low to see how his cunning had deceived them. Then the giant went and took down his door and sat in the doorway, stretching out his arms, so as to catch his prisoners as they went out.

But Odysseus had a plan. He fastened sets of three rams together with twisted withies, and bound a man to each ram in the middle, so that the blind giant's hands would only feel the two outside rams. The biggest and strongest ram Odysseus seized, and held on by his hands and feet to its fleece, under its belly, and then all the sheep went out through the doorway, and the giant felt them, but did not know that they were carrying out the men. 'Dear ram!' he said to the biggest, which carried Odysseus, 'you do not come out first as usual, but last, as if you were slow with sorrow for your master, whose eye Nobody has blinded!'

Then all the rams went out into the open country, and Odysseus unfastened his men and drove the sheep down to his ship and so on board. His crew wept when they heard of the death of six of their friends, but Odysseus made them row out to sea. When he was just so far away from the cave as to be within hearing distance



he shouted at the Cyclops and mocked him. Then that giant broke off the rocky peak of a great hill and threw it in the direction of the sound. The rock fell in front of the ship and raised a wave that drove it back to shore, but Odysseus punted it off with a long pole, and his men rowed out again, far out. Odysseus again shouted to the giant: 'If anyone asks who blinded you, say that it was Odysseus, Laertes' son, of Ithaca, the stormer of cities.'

Then the giant prayed to the Sea God, his father, that Odysseus might never come home, or if he did that he might come late and lonely, with loss of all his men, and find sorrow in his house. Then the giant heaved and threw another rock, but it fell at the stern of the ship, and the wave drove the ship farther out to sea, to the shore of the island. There Odysseus and his men landed and killed some of the giant's sheep, and took supper and drank wine. But the Sea God heard the prayer of his son, the blind giant.

Odysseus and his men sailed on, in what direction and for how long we do not know, till they saw far off an island that shone in the sea. When they came nearer they found that it had a steep cliff

of bronze with a palace on the top. Here lived Aeolus, the King of the Winds, with his six sons and six daughters. He received Odysseus kindly on his island, and entertained him for a whole month. Then he gave him a leather bag, in which he had bound the ways of all the noisy winds. This bag was fastened with a silver cord, and Aeolus left no wind out except the West Wind, which would blow Odysseus straight home to Ithaca. Where he was we cannot guess, except that he was to the west of his own island.

So they sailed for nine days and nights towards the east, and Odysseus always held the helm and steered, but on the tenth day he fell asleep. Then his men said to each other: 'What treasure is it that he keeps in the leather bag, a present from King Aeolus? No doubt the bag is full of gold and silver, while we have only empty hands.' So they opened the bag when they were so near Ithaca that they could see people lighting fires on the shore. Then out rushed all the winds and carried the ship into unknown seas, and when Odysseus woke he was so miserable that he had a mind to drown himself. But he was of an enduring heart and he lay still, and the ship came back to the isle of Aeolus, who cried: 'Away with you! You are the most luckless of living men: you must be hated by the gods.'

Thus Aeolus drove them away, and they sailed for seven days and nights, till they saw land, and came to a harbour with a narrow entrance, and with tall steep rocks on either side. The other eleven ships sailed into the haven, but Odysseus did not venture in; he fastened his ship to a rock at the outer end of the harbour. The place must have been very far north, for as it was summer the sun had hardly set till dawn began again, as it does in Norway and Iceland, where there are many such narrow harbours within walls of rock. These places are called *fjords*. Odysseus sent three men to spy out the country, and at a well outside the town they met a

damsel drawing water; she was the child of the king of the people, the Laestrygonians. The damsel led them to her father's house; he was a giant and seized one of the men of Odysseus, meaning to kill and eat him. The two other men fled to the ships, but the Laestrygonians ran along the tops of the cliffs and threw down great rocks, sinking the vessels and killing the sailors. When Odysseus saw this he drew his sword and cut the cable that fastened his ship to the rock outside the harbour, and his crew rowed for dear life and so escaped, weeping for the death of their friends. Thus the prayer of the blind Cyclops was being fulfilled, for now out of twelve ships Odysseus had but one left.

II

THE ENCHANTRESS CIRCE, THE LAND OF THE DEAD,
THE SIRENS

On they sailed till they came to an island, and there they landed. What the place was they did not know, but it was called Aeaea, and here lived Circe, the enchantress, sister of the wizard king Aeetes, who was the Lord of the Fleece of Gold that Jason won from him by help of the king's daughter, Medea. For two days Odysseus and his men lay on land beside their ship, which they anchored in a bay of the island. On the third morning Odysseus took his sword and spear, and climbed to the top of a high hill, whence he saw the smoke rising out of the wood where Circe had her palace. He thought of going to the house, but it seemed better to return to his men and send some of them to spy out the place. Since the adventure of the Cyclops Odysseus did not care to risk himself among unknown people, and for all that he knew there might be man-eating giants on the island. So he went back, and as he came to the bank of the river he found a great red deer drinking under the shadow of the green boughs. He speared the stag, and, tying his feet together, slung the body from his neck, and so, leaning on his spear, he came to his fellows. Glad they were to see fresh venison, which they cooked, and so dined with plenty of wine.

Next morning Odysseus divided his men into two companies; Eurylochus led one company and he himself the other. Then they put two marked pieces of wood, one for Eurylochus and one for Odysseus, in a helmet, to decide who should go to the house in

the wood. They shook the helmet, and the lot of Eurylochus leaped out, and, weeping for fear, he led his twenty-two men away into the forest. Odysseus and the other twenty-two waited, and when Eurylochus came back alone he was weeping and unable to speak for sorrow. At last he told his story: they had come to the beautiful house of Circe, within the wood, and tame wolves and lions were walking about in front of the house. They wagged their tails, and jumped up, like friendly dogs, round the men of Odysseus, who stood in the gateway and heard Circe singing in a sweet voice as she went up and down before the loom at which she was weaving. Then one of the men of Odysseus called to her, and she came out, a beautiful lady in white robes covered with jewels of gold. She opened the doors and bade them come in, but Eurylochus hid himself and watched, and saw Circe and her maidens mix honey and wine for the men, and bid them sit down on chairs at tables, but when they had drunk of her cup she touched them with her wand. Then they were all changed into swine, and Circe drove them out and shut them up in the sties.

When Odysseus heard that he slung his sword-belt round his shoulders, seized his bow and bade Eurylochus come back with him to the house of Circe; but Eurylochus was afraid. Alone went Odysseus through the woods, and in a dell he met a most beautiful young man, who took his hand and said: 'Unhappy one! how shalt thou free thy friends from so great an enchantress?' Then the young man plucked a plant from the ground; the flower was as white as milk, but the root was black: it is a plant that men may not dig up, but to the gods all things are easy, and the young man was the cunning god Hermes, whom Autolycus, the grandfather of Odysseus, used to worship. 'Take this herb of grace,' he said, 'and when Circe has made thee drink of the cup of her enchantments the herb will so work that they shall have no power over

thee. Then draw thy sword and rush at her, and make her swear that she will not harm thee with her magic.'

Then Hermes departed, and Odysseus went to the house of Circe, and she asked him to enter, and seated him on a chair and gave him the enchanted cup to drink, and then smote him with her wand and bade him go to the sties of the swine. But Odysseus drew his sword, and Circe, with a great cry, fell at his feet, saying: 'Who art thou on whom the cup has no power? Truly thou art Odysseus of Ithaca, for the god Hermes has told me that he should come to my island on his way from Troy. Come now, fear not; let us be friends!'

Then the maidens of Circe came to them, fairy damsels of the wells and woods and rivers. They threw covers of purple silk over the chairs, and on the silver tables they placed golden baskets, and mixed wine in a silver bowl and heated water and bathed Odysseus in a polished bath and clothed him in new raiment and led him to the table and bade him eat and drink. But he sat silent, neither eating nor drinking, in sorrow for his company, till Circe called them out from the sties and disenchanted them. Glad they were to see Odysseus, and they embraced him and wept for joy.

So they went back to their friends at the ship, and told them how Circe would have them all to live with her; but Eurylochus tried to frighten them, saying that she would change them into wolves and lions. Odysseus drew his sword to cut off the head of Eurylochus for his cowardice, but the others prayed that he might be left alone to guard the ship. So Odysseus left him; but Eurylochus had not the courage to be alone, and slunk behind them to the house of Circe. There she welcomed them all and gave them a feast, and there they dwelt for a whole year, and then they wearied for their wives and children and longed to return to Ithaca. They did not guess by what strange path they must sail.

When Odysseus was alone with Circe at night he told her that his men were homesick, and would fain go to Ithaca. Then Circe said: 'There is no way but this: you must sail to the last shore of the stream of the River Oceanus that girdles round the world. There is the Land of the Dead, and the house of Hades and Persephone, the king and queen of the ghosts. There you must call up the ghost of the blind prophet, Tiresias of Thebes, for he alone has knowledge of your way, and the other spirits sweep round shadow-like.'

Then Odysseus thought that his heart would break, for how should he, a living man, go down to the awful dwellings of the dead? But Circe told him the strange things that he must do, and she gave him a black ram and a black ewe, and next day Odysseus called his men together. All followed him to the ship, except one, Elpenor. He had been sleeping, for the sake of the cool air, on the flat roof of the house, and, when suddenly wakened, he missed his foothold on the tall ladder, and fell to the ground and broke his neck. They left him unburned and unburied, and, weeping, they followed Odysseus, as follow they must, to see the homes of the ghosts and the house of Hades. Very sorrowfully they all went on board, taking with them the black ram and the black ewe, and they set the sails, and the wind bore them at its will.

Now in midday they sailed out of the sunlight into darkness, for they had come to the land of the Cimmerian men, which the sun never sees, but all is dark cloud and mist. There they ran the ship ashore, and took out the two black sheep, and walked along the dark banks of the River Oceanus to a place of which Circe had told Odysseus. There the two rivers of the dead meet, where a rock divides the two dark roaring streams. There they dug a trench and poured out mead and wine and water, and prayed to the ghosts; and then they cut the throat of the black ewe, and the grey ghosts gathered to smell the blood. Pale spectres came—

spirits of brides who died long ago and youths unwed and old unhappy men. And many phantoms were there of men who fell in battle, with shadowy spears in their hands, and battered armour. Then Odysseus sacrificed the black ram to the ghost of the



prophet Tiresias, and sat down with his sword in his hand, that no spirit before Tiresias might taste the blood in the trench.

First the spirit of Elpenor came, and begged Odysseus to burn his body, for till his body was burned he was not allowed to mingle with the other souls of dead men. So Odysseus promised to burn and bury him when he went back to Circe's island. Then came the shadow of the mother of Odysseus, who had died when he was at Troy, but for all his grief he would not allow the shadow to come near the blood till Tiresias had tasted it. At length came the spirit of the blind prophet, and he prayed

Odysseus to sheathe his sword and let him drink the blood of the black sheep.

When he had tasted it he said that the Sea God was angry because of the blinding of his son, the Cyclops, and would make his voyaging vain. But if the men of Odysseus were wise, and did not slay and eat the sacred cattle of the Sun God in the isle called Thrinacia, they might all win home. If they were unwise, and if Odysseus did come home, lonely and late he would arrive on the ship of strangers, and he would find proud men wasting his goods and seeking to wed his wife, Penelope. Even if Odysseus alone could kill these men his troubles would not be ended. He must wander over the land as he had wandered over the waters, carrying an oar on his shoulder, till he came to men who had never heard of the sea or of boats. When one of these men, not knowing what an oar was, came and told him that he carried a fan for winnowing corn, then Odysseus must fix the oar in the ground, and offer a sacrifice to the Sea God, and go home, where he would at last live in peace. Odysseus said 'So be it!' and asked how he could have speech with the ghosts. Tiresias told him how this might be done, and then his mother told him how she died of sorrow for him, and Odysseus tried to embrace and kiss her, but his arms only clasped the empty air.

Then came up the beautiful spirits of many dead, unhappy ladies of old times, and then came the souls of Agamemnon and of Achilles and of Aias. Achilles was glad when he heard how bravely his young son had fought at Troy, but he said it was better to be the servant of a poor farmer on earth than to rule over all the ghosts of the dead in the still grey land where the sun never shone and no flowers grew but the mournful asphodel. Many other spirits of Greeks slain at Troy came and asked for news about their friends, but Aias stood apart and silent, still in anger because the arms of Achilles had been given to Odysseus.

In vain Odysseus told him that the Greeks had mourned as much for him as for Achilles; he passed silently away into the house of Hades. At last the legions of the innumerable dead, all that have died since the world began, flocked and filled the air with their low wailing cries, and fear fell on Odysseus, and he went back along that sad last shore of the world's end to his ship, and sailed again out of the darkness into the sunlight, and to the isle of Circe. There they burned the body of Elpenor and piled a mound over it, and on the mound set the oar of the dead man, and so went to the palace of Circe.

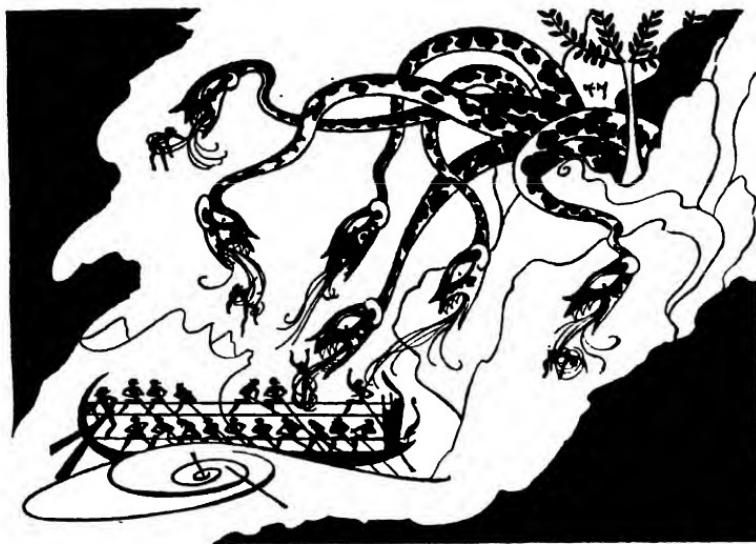
Odysseus told Circe all his adventures, and then she warned him of dangers yet to come and showed him how he might escape them. He listened and remembered all that she spoke, and these two said goodbye for ever. Circe wandered away alone into the woods, and Odysseus and his men set sail and crossed the unknown seas. Presently the wind fell, and the sea was calm, and they saw a beautiful island from which came the sound of sweet singing. Odysseus knew who the singers were, for Circe had told him that they were the Sirens, a kind of beautiful mermaids, deadly to men. Among the flowers they sit and sing, but the flowers hide the bones of men who have listened and landed on the island and died of that strange music, which carried the soul away.

Odysseus now took a great cake of beeswax and cut it up into small pieces, which he bade his men soften and place in their ears, that they might not hear that singing. But, as he desired to hear it and yet live, he bade the sailors bind him tightly to the mast with ropes, and they must not unbind him, however much he might implore them to set him free. When all this was done the men sat down on the benches, all orderly, and smote the grey sea with their oars, and the ship rushed along through the clear still water and came opposite the island.

Then the sweet singing of the Sirens was borne over the sea,

'Hither, come hither, renowned Odysseus,
Great glory of the Achaean name.
Here stay thy ship, that thou mayest listen to our song.
Never has any man driven his ship past our island
Till he has heard our voices, sweet as the honeycomb ;
Gladly he has heard, and wiser has he gone on his way.
Hither, come hither, for we know all things,
All that the Greeks wrought and endured in Troyland,
All that shall hereafter be upon the fruitful earth.'

Thus they sang, offering Odysseus all knowledge and wisdom, which they knew that he loved more than anything in the world. To other men, no doubt, they would have offered other pleasures. Odysseus desired to listen and he nodded to his men to loosen his bonds. But Perimedes and Eurylochus arose, and laid on him yet stronger bonds, and the ship was driven past that island, till the song of the Sirens faded away, and then the men set Odysseus free and took the wax out of their ears.



III

THE WHIRLPOOL, THE SEA MONSTER AND THE CATTLE OF THE SUN

THEY had not sailed far when they heard the sea roaring, and saw a great wave, over which hung a thick shining cloud of spray. They had drifted to a place where the sea narrowed between two high black rocks: under the rock on the left was a boiling whirlpool in which no ship could live; the opposite rock showed nothing dangerous, but Odysseus had been warned by Circe that here too lay great peril. We may ask why did Odysseus pass through the narrows between these two rocks? Why did he not steer on the outer side of one or the other? The reason seems to have been that on the outer side of

these cliffs were the tall reefs which men called the Wandering Rocks. Between them the sea water leaped in high columns of white foam, and the rocks themselves rushed together, grinding and clashing, while fire flew out of the crevices and crests as from a volcano.

Circe had told Odysseus about the Wandering Rocks, which do not even allow flocks of doves to pass through them; even one of the doves is always caught and crushed, and no ship of men escapes that tries to pass that way, and the bodies of the sailors and the planks of the ships are confusedly tossed by the waves of the sea and the storms of ruinous fire. Of all ships that ever sailed the sea only *Argo*, the ship of Jason, has escaped the Wandering Rocks, as you may read in the story of the Fleece of Gold. For these reasons Odysseus was forced to steer between the rock of the whirlpool and the rock which seemed harmless. In the narrows between these two cliffs the sea ran like a rushing river, and the men, in fear, ceased to hold the oars, and down the stream the oars plashed in confusion. But Odysseus, whom Circe had told of this new danger, bade them grasp the oars again and row hard. He told the man at the helm to steer under the great rocky cliff on the right, and to keep clear of the whirlpool and the cloud of spray on the left. Well he knew the danger of the rock on the right, for within it was a deep cave, where a monster named Scylla lived, yelping with a shrill voice out of her six hideous heads. Each head hung down from a long, thin, scaly neck, and in each mouth were three rows of greedy teeth, and twelve long feelers, with claws at the ends of them, dropped down, ready to catch at men. There in her cave Scylla sits, fishing with her feelers for dolphins and other great fish, and for men, if any men sail by that way. Against this deadly thing none may fight, for she cannot be slain with the spear.¹

¹ There is a picture of this monster attacking a man in a boat. The picture was painted centuries before the time of Odysseus.

All this Odysseus knew, for Circe had warned him. But he also knew that on the other side of the strait, where the sea spray for ever flew high above the rock, was a whirlpool, called Charybdis, which would swallow up his ship if it came within the current, while Scylla could only catch some of his men. For this reason he bade the helmsman to steer close to the rock of Scylla, and he did not tell the sailors that she lurked there with her body hidden in her deep cave. He himself put on his armour and took two spears and went and stood in the raised half-deck at the front of the ship, thinking that at least he would have a stroke at Scylla. Then they rowed down the swift sea stream, while the wave of the whirlpool now rose up, till the spray hid the top of the rock, and now fell and bubbled with black sand. They were watching the whirlpool, when out from the hole in the cliff sprang the six heads of Scylla, and up into the air went six of Odysseus' men, each calling to him, as they were swept within her hole in the rock, where she devoured them. 'This was the most pitiful thing', Odysseus said, 'that my eyes have seen, of all my sorrows in searching out the paths of the sea.'

The ship swept through the roaring narrows between the rock of Scylla and the whirlpool of Charybdis, into the open sea, and the men, weary and heavy of heart, bent over their oars and longed for rest.

Now a place of rest seemed near at hand, for in front of the ship lay a beautiful island, and the men could hear the bleating of sheep and the lowing of cows as they were being herded into their stalls. But Odysseus remembered that in the Land of the Dead the ghost of the blind prophet had warned him of one thing. If his men killed and ate the cattle of the Sun God, in the sacred island of Thrinacia, they would all perish. So Odysseus told his crew of this prophecy, and bade them row past the island. Eurylochus was angry and said that the men were tired and could row no farther,

but must land and take supper and sleep comfortably on shore. On hearing Eurylochus, the whole crew shouted and said that they would go no farther that night, and Odysseus had no power to compel them. He could only make them swear not to touch the cattle of the Sun God, which they promised readily enough, and so went ashore, took supper and slept.

In the night a great storm arose: the clouds and driving mist blinded the face of the sea and sky, and for a whole month the wild south wind hurled the waves on the coast, and no ship of these times could venture out in the tempest. Meanwhile the crew ate up all the stores in the ship and finished the wine, so that they were driven to catch sea birds and fishes, of which they took but few, the sea being so rough upon the rocks. Odysseus went up into the island alone, to pray to the gods, and when he had prayed he found a sheltered place and there he fell asleep.

Eurylochus took the occasion, while Odysseus was away, to bid the crew seize and slay the sacred cattle of the Sun God, which no man might touch, and this they did, so that when Odysseus wakened and came near the ship, he smelled the roast meat, and knew what had been done. He rebuked the men, but as the cattle were dead they kept eating them for six days; and then the storm ceased, the wind fell, the sun shone and they set the sails and away they went. But this evil deed was punished; for when they were out of sight of land a great thundercloud overshadowed them, the wind broke the mast, which crushed the head of the helmsman, and the lightning struck the ship in the centre; she reeled, the men fell overboard, and the heads of the crew floated a moment, like cormorants, above the waves.

But Odysseus had kept hold of a rope, and when the vessel righted he walked the deck till a wave stripped off all the tackling and loosened the sides from the keel. Odysseus had only time to lash the broken mast with a rope to the keel, and sit on this raft

with his feet in the water, while the South Wind rose again furiously, and drove the raft back till it came under the rock where was the whirlpool of Charybdis. Here Odysseus would have been drowned, but he caught at the root of a fig tree that grew on the rock, and there he hung, clinging with his toes to the crumbling stones till the whirlpool boiled up again and up came the timbers. Down on the timbers Odysseus dropped, and so sat rowing with his hands, and the wind drifted him at last to a shelving beach of an island.

Here dwelt a kind of fairy, called Calypso, who found Odysseus nearly dead on the beach, and was kind to him, and kept him in her cave, where he lived for seven long years, always desiring to leave the beautiful fairy and return to Ithaca and his wife Penelope. But no ship of men ever came near that isle, which is the central place of all the seas, and he had no ship and no men to sail and row. Calypso was very kind and very beautiful, being the daughter of the wizard Atlas, who holds the two pillars that keep earth and sea asunder. But Odysseus was longing to see if it were but the smoke going up from the houses of rocky Ithaca, and he had a desire to die.

HOW TELEMACHUS WENT TO SEEK HIS FATHER

WHEN Odysseus had lived nearly seven years in the island of Calypso, his son Telemachus, whom he had left in Ithaca as a little child, went forth to seek for his father. In Ithaca he and his mother, Penelope, had long been very unhappy. As Odysseus did not come home after the war, and as nothing was heard about him from the day when the Greeks sailed from Troy, it was supposed that he must be dead. But Telemachus was still but a boy of twelve years old, and the father of Odysseus, Laertes, was very old, and had gone to a farm in the country, where he did nothing but take care of his garden. There was thus no king in Ithaca, and the boys, who had been about ten years old when Odysseus went to Troy, were now grown up, and as their fathers had gone to the war they did just as they pleased. Twelve of them wanted to marry Penelope, and they, with about a hundred others as wild as themselves, from the neighbouring islands, by way of paying court to Penelope ate and drank all day at her house. They killed the cattle, sheep and swine; they drank the wine and amused themselves with Penelope's maidens, of whom she had many. Nobody could stop them; they would never go away, they said, till Penelope chose one of them to be her husband and king of the island, though Telemachus was the rightful prince.

Penelope at last promised that she would choose one of them when she had finished a great shroud of linen, to be the death shroud of old Laertes when he died. All day she wove it, but at night, when her wooers had gone (for they did not sleep in her house), she unwove it again. But one of her maidens told this to

the wooers, so she had to finish the shroud, and now they pressed her more than ever to make her choice. But she kept hoping that Odysseus was still alive and would return, though if he did how was he to turn so many strong young men out of his house?

The Goddess of Wisdom, Athene, had always favoured Odysseus, and now she spoke up among the gods, where they sat, as men say, in their holy heaven. Not by winds is it shaken, nor wet with rain, nor does the snow come thither, but clear air is spread about it cloudless, and the white light floats over it. Athene told how good, wise and brave Odysseus was and how he was kept in the isle of Calypso, while men ruined his wealth and wooed his wife. She said that she would herself go to Ithaca and make Telemachus appeal to all the people of the country, showing how evilly he was treated, and then sail abroad to seek news of his father. So Athene spoke, and flashed down from Olympus to Ithaca, where she took the shape of a mortal man, Mentes, a chief of the Taphians. In front of the doors she found the proud wooers playing at draughts and other games while supper was being made ready. When Telemachus, who was standing apart, saw the stranger, he went to him and led him into the house and treated him kindly, while the wooers ate and drank and laughed noisily.

Then Telemachus told Athene (or, as he supposed, the stranger) how evilly he was used, while his father's white bones might be wasting on an unknown shore or rolling in the billows of the salt sea. Athene (or Mentes) said that he himself was an old friend of Odysseus, and had touched at Ithaca on his way to Cyprus to buy copper. 'But Odysseus', he said, 'is not dead; he will certainly come home, and that speedily. You are so like him, you must be his son.' Telemachus replied that he was, and Mentes was full of anger, seeing how the wooers insulted him, and told him first to complain to an assembly of all the people, and then to take a ship and go seeking news of Odysseus.

Then Athene departed, and next day Telemachus called an assembly, and spoke to the people, but though they were sorry for him they could not help him. One old man, however, a prophet, said that Odysseus would certainly come home, but the wooers only threatened and insulted him. In the evening Athene came again, in the appearance of Mentor, not the same man as Mentes, but an Ithacan and a friend of Odysseus. She encouraged Telemachus to take a ship with twenty oarsmen, and he told the wooers that he was going to see Menelaus and Nestor, and ask tidings of his father. They only mocked him, but he made all things ready for his voyage without telling his mother. It was old Eurykleia, who had been his nurse and his father's nurse, that brought him wine and food for his journey; and at night, when the sea wind wakens in summer, he and Mentor went on board, and all night they sailed, and at noon next day they reached Pylos on the sea sands, the city of Nestor the Old.

Nestor received them gladly, and so did his sons, Pisistratus and Thrasymedes, who fought at Troy, and next day, when Mentor had gone, Pisistratus and Telemachus drove together, up hill and down dale—a two days' journey—to Lacedaemon, lying beneath Mount Taygetus on the bank of the clear River Eurotas.

Not one of the Greeks had seen Odysseus since the day when they all sailed from Troy, yet Menelaus, in a strange way, was able to tell Telemachus that his father still lived, and was with Calypso on a lonely island, the centre of all the seas. We shall see how Menelaus knew this. When Telemachus and Pisistratus came he was giving a feast, and called them to his table. It would not have been courteous to ask them who they were till they had been bathed and clothed in fresh raiment and had eaten and drunk. After dinner Menelaus saw how much Telemachus admired his house, and the flashing of light from the walls, which were covered with bronze panels, and from the cups of gold, and

the amber and ivory and silver. Such things Telemachus had never seen in Ithaca. Noticing his surprise Menelaus said that he had brought many rich things from Troy, after eight years wandering to Cyprus and Phoenicia and Egypt, and even to Libya on the north coast of Africa. Yet he said that, though he was rich and fortunate, he was unhappy when he remembered the brave men who had died for his sake at Troy. But above all he was miserable for the loss of the best of them all, Odysseus, who was so long unheard of, and none knew whether, at that hour, he was alive or dead. At these words Telemachus hid his face in his purple mantle and shed tears, so that Menelaus guessed who he was, but he said nothing.

Then came into the hall, from her own fragrant chamber, Helen of the fair hands, as beautiful as ever she had been, her bower maidens carrying her golden distaff, with which she span, and a silver basket to hold her wool, for the white hands of Helen were never idle.

Helen knew Telemachus by his likeness to his father, Odysseus, and when she said this to Menelaus, Pisistratus overheard her and told how Telemachus had come to them seeking for news of his father. Menelaus was much moved in his heart, and Helen no less, when they saw the son of Odysseus, who had been the most trusty of all their friends. They could not help shedding tears, for Pisistratus remembered his dear brother Antilochus, whom Memnon slew in battle at Troy, Memnon the son of the bright Dawn. But Helen wished to comfort them, and she brought a drug of magical virtue, which Polydamna, the wife of Thon, King of Egypt, had given to her. This drug lulls all pain and anger and brings forgetfulness of every sorrow, and Helen poured it from a golden vial into the mixing bowl of gold, and they drank the wine and were comforted.

Then Helen told Telemachus what great deeds Odysseus did

at Troy, and how he crept into the town disguised as a beggar, and came to her house, when he stole the Luck of Troy. Menelaus told how Odysseus kept him and the other princes quiet in the horse of tree, when Deiphobus made Helen call to them all in the very voices of their own wives, and to Telemachus it was great joy to hear of his father's courage and wisdom.

Next day Telemachus showed to Menelaus how hardly he and his mother were treated by the proud wooers, and Menelaus prayed that Odysseus might come back to Ithaca and slay the wooers every one. ‘But as to what you ask me,’ he said, ‘I will tell you all that I have heard about your father. In my wanderings after I sailed from Troy the storm winds kept me for three weeks in the island called Pharos, a day’s voyage from the mouth of the River Aegyptus.¹ We were almost starving, for our food was done, and my crew went round the shores, fishing with hook and line. Now in that isle lives a goddess, the daughter of Proteus, the Old Man of the Sea. She advised me that if I could but catch her father when he came out of the sea to sleep on the shore he would tell me everything that I needed to know. At noonday he used to come out, with all his flock of seals round him, and sleep among them on the sands. If I could seize him, she said, he would turn into all manner of shapes in my hands—beasts and serpents and burning fire; but at last he would appear in his own shape and answer all my questions.

‘So the goddess spoke, and she dug hiding-places in the sands for me and three of my men and covered us with the skins of seals. At noonday the Old Man came out with his seals and counted them, and then he lay down and fell asleep. Then we leaped up and rushed at him and gripped him fast. He turned into the shapes of a lion and of a leopard; of a snake and a huge boar; then he was running water, and next he was a tall, blossoming

¹ The old name of the Nile.

tree. But we held him firmly, and at last he took his own shape, and told me that I should never have a fair wind till I had sailed back into the River Aegyptus and sacrificed there to the gods in heaven. Then I asked him for news about my brother, Agamemnon, and he told me how my brother was slain in his own hall,



and how Aias, the son of Oileus, was drowned in the sea. Lastly, he told me about Odysseus: how he was kept on a lonely island by the fairy Calypso, and was unhappy, and had no ship and no crew to escape and win home.'

This was all that Menelaus could tell Telemachus, who stayed with Menelaus for a month. All that time the wooers lay in wait for him, with a ship, in a narrow strait which they thought he must sail through on his way back to Ithaca. In that strait they meant to catch him and kill him.



V

HOW ODYSSEUS ESCAPED FROM THE ISLAND
OF CALYPSO

Now the day after Menelaus told Telemachus that Odysseus was still a living man, the gods sent Hermes to Calypso. So Hermes bound on his feet his fair golden sandals, that wax not old, and bear him, alike over wet sea and dry land, as swift as the wind. Along the crests of the waves he flew, like the cormorant that chases fishes through the sea deeps, with his plumage wet in the sea brine. He reached the island, and went up to the cave of Calypso, wherein dwelt the nymph of the braided tresses, and he found her within. And on the hearth there was a

great fire burning, and from afar, through the isle, was smelt the fragrance of cleft cedar blazing, and of sandal wood. And the nymph within was singing with a sweet voice as she fared to and fro before the loom, and wove with a shuttle of gold. All round about the cave there was a wood blossoming, alder and poplar and sweet-smelling cypress. Therein roosted birds long of wing—owls and falcons, and chattering sea-crows which have their business in the waters. And lo! there, about the hollow cave, trailed a gadding garden vine, all rich with clusters. And fountains, four set orderly, were running with clear water hard by one another, turned each to his own course. Around soft meadows bloomed of violets and parsley; yea, even a deathless god who came thither might wonder at the sight and be glad at heart.

There the messenger, the slayer of Argos, stood and wondered. Now when he had gazed at all with wonder, he went into the wide cave; nor did Calypso, that fair goddess, fail to know him when she saw him face to face; for the gods use not to be strange one to another, not though one have his habitation far away. But he found not Odysseus, the great-hearted, within the cave, who sat weeping on the shore even as aforetime, straining his soul with tears and groans and griefs, and as he wept he looked wistfully over the unharvested deep. And Calypso, that fair goddess, questioned Hermes, when she had made him sit on a bright shining seat:

‘Wherefore, I pray thee, Hermes of the golden wand, hast thou come hither, worshipful and welcome, whereas as of old thou wert not wont to visit me? Tell me all thy thought; my heart is set on fulfilling it, if fulfil it I may, and if it hath been fulfilled in the counsel of fate. But now follow me further, that I may set before thee the entertainment of strangers.’

Therewith the goddess spread a table with ambrosia and set it by him, and mixed the ruddy nectar. So the messenger, the slayer

of Argos, did eat and drink. Now after he had supped and comforted his soul with food, at the last he answered, and spake to her on this wise:

'Thou makest question of me on my coming, a goddess of a god, and I will tell thee this my saying truly, at thy command. 'Twas Zeus that bade me come hither, by no will of mine; nay, who of his free will would speed over such a wondrous space of sea whereby is no city of mortals that do sacrifice to the gods. He saith that thou hast with thee a man most wretched beyond his fellows, beyond those men that round the city of Priam for nine years fought, and in the tenth year sacked the city and departed homeward. Yet on the way they sinned against Athene, and she raised upon them an evil blast and long waves of the sea. Then all the rest of his good company was lost, but it came to pass that the wind bare and the wave brought him hither. And now Zeus biddeth thee send him hence with what speed thou mayest, for it is not ordained that he die away from his friends, but rather it is his fate to look on them even yet, and to come to his high-roofed home and his own country.'

So spake he, and Calypso, that fair goddess, shuddered and spake unto him: 'Hard are ye gods and jealous exceeding, who ever grudge goddesses openly to mate with men. Him I saved as he went all alone bestriding the keel of a bark, for that Zeus had crushed and cleft his swift ship with a white bolt in the midst of the wine-dark deep. There all the rest of his good company was lost, but it came to pass that the wind bare and the wave brought him hither. And him have I loved and cherished, and I said that I would make him to know not death and age for ever. But I will give him no dispatch, not I, for I have no ships by me with oars, nor company to bear him on his way over the broad back of the sea. Yet will I be forward to put this in his mind, and will hide naught, that all unharmed he may come to his own country.'

Then the messenger, the slayer of Argos, answered her: 'Yea, speed him now upon his path and have regard unto the wrath of Zeus, lest haply he be angered and bear hard on thee hereafter.'

Therewith the great slayer of Argos departed, but the lady nymph went on her way to the great-hearted Odysseus, when she had heard the message of Zeus. And there she found him sitting on the shore, and his eyes were never dry of tears, and his sweet life was ebbing away as he mourned for his return. In the daytime he would sit on the rocks and on the beach, straining his soul with tears and groans and griefs, and through his tears he would look wistfully over the unharvested deep. So, standing near him, that fair goddess spake to him:

'Hapless man, sorrow no more I pray thee, in this isle, nor let thy good life waste away, for even now will I send thee hence with all my heart. Nay, arise and cut long beams, and fashion a wide raft with the axe, and lay deckings high thereupon, that it may bear thee over the misty deep. And I will place therein bread and water and red wine to thy heart's desire, to keep hunger far away. And I will put raiment upon thee, and send a fair gale, that so thou mayest come all unharmed to thine own country, if indeed it be the good pleasure of the gods who hold wide heaven, who are stronger than I am both to will and to do.'

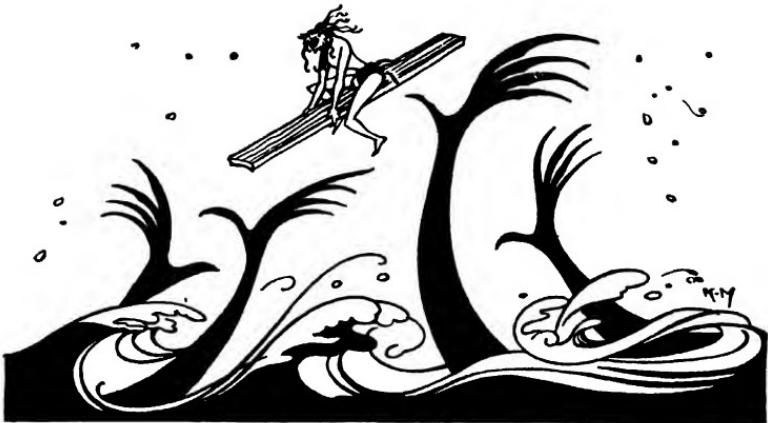
Then Odysseus was glad and sad: glad that the gods took thought for him, and sad to think of crossing alone the wide unsailed seas. Calypso said to him:

'So it is indeed thy wish to get thee home to thine own dear country even in this hour? Good fortune go with thee even so! Yet didst thou know in thine heart what thou art ordained to suffer, or ever thou reach thine own country, here, even here, thou wouldest abide with me and keep this house, and wouldest never taste of death, though thou longest to see thy wife, for whom thou hast ever a desire day by day. Not, in sooth, that I

avow me to be less noble than she in form or fashion, for it is in no wise meet that mortal women should match them with immortals in shape and comeliness.'

And Odysseus of many counsels answered, and spake unto her: 'Be not wroth with me, goddess and queen. Myself I know it well, how wise Penelope is meaner to look upon than thou in comeliness and stature. But she is mortal, and thou knowest not age nor death. Yet, even so, I wish and long day by day to fare homeward and see the day of my returning. Yea, and if some god shall wreck me in the wine-dark deep, even so I will endure, with a heart within me patient of affliction. For already have I suffered full much, and much have I toiled in perils of waves and war; let this be added to the tale of those.'

Next day Calypso brought to Odysseus carpenters' tools, and he felled trees, and made a great raft, and a mast and sails out of canvas. In five days he had finished his raft and launched it, and Calypso placed in it skins full of wine and water and flour and many pleasant things to eat, and so they kissed for that last time and took farewell, he going alone on the wide sea, and she turning lonely to her own home. He might have lived for ever with the beautiful fairy, but he chose to live and die, if he could, with his wife Penelope.



VI

HOW ODYSSEUS WAS WRECKED, YET REACHED PHAEACIA

As long as the fair wind blew Odysseus sat and steered his raft, never seeing land or any ship of men. He kept his eye at night on the Great Bear, holding it always on his left hand as Calypso taught him. Seventeen days he sailed, and on the eighteenth day he saw the shadowy mountain peaks of an island called Phaeacia. But now the Sea God saw him, and remembered how Odysseus had blinded his son, the Cyclops. In anger he raised a terrible storm: great clouds covered the sky, and all the winds met. Odysseus wished that he had died when the Trojans gathered round him as he defended the dead body of Achilles. For had he died then he would have been burned and buried by his friends, but if he were now drowned his ghost would always wander alone on the fringes of the Land of the Dead, like the ghost of Elpenor.

As he thought thus the winds broke the mast of his raft, and the sail and yardarm fell into the sea, and the waves dragged him deep down. At last he rose to the surface and swam after his raft, and climbed on to it, and sat there, while the winds tossed the raft about like a feather. The Sea Goddess, Ino, saw him and pitied him, and rose from the water as a seagull rises after it has dived. She spoke to him, and threw her bright veil to him, saying: 'Wind this round your breast and throw off your clothes. Leap from the raft and swim, and when you reach land cast the veil back into the sea and turn away your head.'

Odysseus caught the veil and wound it about his breast, but he determined not to leave the raft while the timbers held together. Even as he thought thus the timbers were driven asunder by the waves, and he seized a plank and sat astride it as a man rides a horse. Then the winds fell, all but the North Wind, which drifted Odysseus on for two days and nights. On the third day all was calm, and the land was very near, and Odysseus began to swim towards it, through a terrible surf, which crashed and foamed on sheer rocks, where all his bones would be broken. Thrice he clasped a rock, and thrice the backwash of the wave dragged him out to sea. Then he swam outside of the breakers, along the line of land, looking for a safe place, and at last he came to the mouth of the river. Here all was smooth, with a shelving beach, and his feet touched bottom. He staggered out of the water and swooned away as soon as he was on dry land. When he came to himself he unbound the veil of Ino and cast it into the sea, and fell back, quite spent, among the reeds of the river, naked and starving. He crept between two thick olive trees that grew close together and made a shelter against the wind, and he covered himself all over thickly with fallen dry leaves, till he grew warm again and fell into a deep sleep.

While Odysseus slept, alone and naked in an unknown land, a

dream came to beautiful Nausicaa, the daughter of the king of that country, which is called Phaeacia. The dream was in the shape of a girl who was a friend of Nausicaa, and it said: 'Nausicaa, how has your mother such a careless daughter? There are many beautiful garments in the house that need to be washed, against your wedding day, when, as is the custom, you must give mantles and tunics to the guests. Let us go a washing to the river to-morrow, taking a car to carry the raiment.'

When Nausicaa wakened next day she remembered the dream, and went to her father, and asked him to lend her a car to carry the clothes. She said nothing about her marriage day, for though many young princes were in love with her, she was in love with none of them. Still, the clothes must be washed, and her father lent her a wagon with a high frame and mules to drive. The clothes were piled in the car, and food was packed in a basket, every sort of dainty thing, and Nausicaa took the reins and drove slowly while many girls followed her, her friends of her own age. They came to a deep clear pool that overflowed into shallow paved runs of water, and there they washed the clothes, and trod them down in the runlets. Next they laid them out to dry in the sun and wind on the pebbles, and then they took their meal of cakes and other good things.

When they had eaten they threw down their veils and began to play at ball, a game like rounders. Nausicaa threw the ball at a girl who was running, but missed her, and the ball fell into the deep swift river. All the girls screamed and laughed, and the noise they made wakened Odysseus where he lay in the little wood. 'Where am I?' he said to himself. 'Is this a country of fierce and savage men? A sound of girls at play rings round me. Can they be fairies of the hill tops and the rivers and the water meadows?' As he had no clothes, and the voices seemed to be voices of women, Odysseus broke a great leafy bough which hid all his body, but

his feet were bare, his face was wild with weariness and cold and hunger, and his hair and beard were matted and rough with the salt water.

The girls, when they saw such a face peering over the leaves of the bough, screamed and ran this way and that along the beach. But Nausicaa, as became the daughter of the king, stood erect and unafraid, and as Odysseus dared not go near and kneel to her, he spoke from a distance and said :

'I pray thee, O Queen, whether thou art a goddess or a mortal! If indeed thou art a goddess of them that keep the wide heaven, to Artemis, then, the daughter of great Zeus, I mainly liken thee for beauty and stature and shapeliness. But if thou art one of the daughters of men who dwell on earth, thrice blessed are thy father and thy lady mother, and thrice blessed thy brethren. Surely their souls ever glow with gladness for thy sake each time they see thee entering the dance, so fair a flower of maidens. But he is of heart the most blessed beyond all other who shall prevail with gifts of wooing, and lead thee to his home. Never have mine eyes beheld such an one among mortals, neither man nor woman; great awe comes upon me as I look on thee. Yet in Delos once I saw as goodly a thing—a young sapling of a palm tree springing by the altar of Apollo. For thither too I went, and many people with me, on that path where my sore troubles were to be. Yea! and when I looked thereupon, long time I marvelled in spirit—for never grew there yet so goodly a shoot from ground—even in such wise as I wonder at thee, lady, and am astonished and do greatly fear to touch thy knees, though grievous sorrow is upon me.'

'Yesterday, on the twentieth day, I escaped from the wine-dark deep, but all that time continually the wave bare me, and the vehement winds drove from the isle Ogygia. And now some god has cast me on this shore that here too, methinks, some evil may betide me; for I think not that trouble will cease; the gods ere that



See page 144

THE GIRLS . . . SCREAMED AND RAN THIS WAY AND THAT
ALONG THE BEACH



time will yet bring many a thing to pass. But, Queen, have pity on me, for after many trials and sore, to thee first of all am I come, and of the other folk, who hold this city and land, I know no man. Nay, show me the town ; give me an old garment to cast about me, if thou hadst, when thou camest here, any wrap for the linen. And may the gods grant thee all thy heart's desire : a husband and a home, and a mind at one with his may they give—a good gift, for there is nothing mightier and nobler than when man and wife are of one heart and mind in a house, a grief to their foes, and to their friends great joy, but their own hearts know it best.'

Then Nausicaa of the white arms answered him, and said :

'Stranger, as thou seemest no evil man nor foolish—and it is Olympian Zeus himself that giveth weal to men, to the good and to the evil, to each one as he will, and this thy lot doubtless is of him, and so thou must in anywise endure it—now, since thou hast come to our city and our land, thou shalt not lack raiment nor aught else that is the due of a hapless suppliant when he has met them who can befriend him. And I will show thee the town and name the name of the people. The Phaeacians hold this city and land, and I am the daughter of Alcinous, great of heart, on whom all the might and force of the Phaeacians depend.'

Thus she spake, and called to her maidens of the fair tresses : 'Halt, my maidens, whither flee ye at the sight of a man ? Ye surely do not take him for an enemy ? That mortal breathes not, and never will be born, who shall come with war to the land of the Phaeacians, for they are very dear to the gods. Far apart we live in the wash of the waves, the outermost of men, and no other mortals are conversant with us. Nay, but this man is some helpless one come hither in his wanderings, whom now we must kindly entreat, for all strangers and beggars are from Zeus, and a little gift is dear. So, my maidens, give the stranger meat and drink, and bathe him in the river, where there is a shelter from the winds.'

So she spake, but they halted and called each to the other, and they brought Odysseus to the sheltered place, and made him sit down, as Nausicaa bade them, the daughter of Alcinous, high of heart. Beside him they laid a mantle and a doublet for raiment, and gave him soft olive oil in the golden cruse, and bade him wash in the streams of the river. Then goodly Odysseus spake among the maidens, saying: 'I pray you stand thus apart while I myself wash the brine from my shoulders, and anoint me with olive oil, for truly oil is long a stranger to my skin. But in your sight I will not bathe, for I am ashamed to make me naked in the company of fair-tressed maidens.'

Then they went apart and told all to their lady. But with the river water the goodly Odysseus washed from his skin the salt scurf that covered his back and broad shoulders, and from his head he wiped the crusted brine of the barren sea. But when he had washed his whole body and anointed him with olive oil, and had clad himself in the raiment that the unwedded maiden gave him, then Athene, the daughter of Zeus, made him greater and more mighty to behold, and from his head caused deep curling locks to flow, like the hyacinth flower. And, as when some skilful man overlays gold upon silver—one that Hephaestus and Pallas Athene have taught all manner of craft, and full of grace is his handiwork—even so did Athene shed grace about his head and shoulders.

Then to the shore of the sea went Odysseus apart, and sat down, glowing in beauty and grace, and the princess marvelled at him and spake among her fair-tressed maidens, saying:

'Listen, my white-armed maidens, and I will say somewhat. Not without the will of all the gods who hold Olympus has this man come among the godlike Phaeacians. Erewhile he seemed to me uncomely, but now he is like the gods that keep the wide heaven. Would that such an one might be called my husband.'

dwelling here, and that it might please him here to abide! But come, my maidens, give the stranger meat and drink.'

Thus she spake, and they gave ready ear and hearkened, and set beside Odysseus meat and drink, and the steadfast goodly Odysseus did eat and drink eagerly, for it was long since he had tasted food.

Now Nausicaa of the white arms had another thought. She folded the raiment and stored it in the goodly wain, and yoked the mules, strong of hoof, and herself climbed into the car. Then she called on Odysseus, and spake and hailed him: 'Up now, stranger, and rouse thee to go to the city, that I may convey thee to the house of my wise father, where, I promise thee, thou shalt get knowledge of all the noblest of the Phaeacians. But do thou even as I tell thee, and thou seemest a discreet man enough. So long as we are passing along the fields and farms of men, do thou fare quickly with the maidens behind the mules and the chariot, and I will lead the way. But when we set foot within the city, whereby goes a high wall with towers, and there is a fair haven on either side of the town, and narrow is the entrance, and curved ships are drawn up on either hand of the mole, thou shalt find a fair grove of Athene, a poplar grove, near the road, and a spring wells forth therein and a meadow lies all around.'

'There is my father's land and his fruitful close, within the sound of a man's shout from the city. Sit thee down there and wait until such time as we may have come into the city and reached the house of my father. But when thou deemest that we are got to the palace, then go up to the city of the Phaeacians, and ask for the house of my father Alcinous, high of heart. It is easily known, and a young child could be thy guide, for nowise like it are builded the houses of the Phaeacians, so goodly is the palace of the hero Alcinous. But when thou art within the shadow of the halls and the court, pass quickly through the great chamber till

thou comest to my mother, who sits at the hearth in the light of the fire, weaving yarn of sea-purple stain, a wonder to behold. Her chair is leaned against a pillar and her maidens sit behind her. And there my father's throne leans close to hers, wherein he sits and drinks his wine, like an immortal. Pass thou by him, and cast thy hands about my mother's knees that thou mayest see quickly and with joy the day of thy returning, even if thou art from a very far country. If but her heart be kindly disposed towards thee, then is there hope that thou shalt see thy friends, and come to thy well-builded house and to thine own country.'

She spake and smote the mules with the shining whip, and quickly they left behind them the streams of the river, and well they trotted and well they paced; and she took heed to drive in such wise that the maidens and Odysseus might follow on foot and cunningly she plied the lash. Then the sun set, and they came to the famous grove, the sacred place of Athene; so there the goodly Odysseus sat him down. Then straightway he prayed to the daughter of mighty Zeus: 'Listen to me, child of Zeus, lord of the aegis, unwearied maiden; hear me even now, since before thou hearest not when I was smitten on the sea, when the renowned earth-shaker smote me. Grant me to come to the Phaeacians as one dear and worthy of pity.'

So he spake in prayer, and Pallas Athene heard him; but she did not yet appear to him face to face, for she had regard unto her father's brother, who furiously raged against the god-like Odysseus till he should come to his own country.

While Nausicaa and her maidens went home, Odysseus waited near the temple till they should have arrived, and then he rose and walked to the city, wondering at the harbour, full of ships, and at the strength of the walls. The goddess Athene met him, disguised as a mortal girl, and told him again how the name of the king was Alcinous, and his wife's name was Arete: she was wise and kin-

and had great power in the city. The goddess caused Odysseus to pass unseen among the people till he reached the palace, which shone with bronze facings to the walls, while within the hall were golden hounds and golden statues of young men holding torches burning to give light to those who sat at supper. The gardens were very beautiful, full of fruit trees and watered by streams that flowed from two fountains. Odysseus stood and wondered at the beauty of the gardens, and then walked unseen through the hall, and knelt at the feet of Queen Arete and implored her to send him in a ship to his own country.

A table was brought to him, and food and wine were set before him, and Alcinous, as his guests were going home, spoke out and said that the stranger was to be entertained, whoever he might be, and sent safely on his way. The guests departed, and Arete, looking at Odysseus, saw that the clothes he wore were possessions of her house, and asked him who he was, and how he got the raiment? Then he told her how he had been shipwrecked, and how Nausicaa had given him food and garments out of those which she had been washing. Then Arete said that Nausicaa should have brought Odysseus straight to her house; but Odysseus answered: 'Chide not, I pray you, the blameless damsel,' and explained that he himself was shy, and afraid that Nausicaa's parents might not like to see her coming with an unknown stranger. King Alcinous answered that he was not jealous and suspicious. To a stranger so noble as Odysseus he would very gladly see his daughter married, and would give him a house and plenty of everything. But if the stranger desired to go to his own country, then a ship should be made ready for him. Thus courteous was Alcinous, for he readily saw that Odysseus, who had not yet told his name, was of noble birth, strong and wise. Then all went to bed, and Odysseus had a soft bed and a warm, with blankets of purple.

Next day Alcinous sent two-and-fifty young men to prepare a ship, and they moored her in readiness out in the shore water; but the chiefs dined with Alcinous, and the minstrel sang about the Trojan war, and so stirred the heart of Odysseus that he held his mantle before his face and wept. When Alcinous saw that he proposed that they should go and amuse themselves with sports in the open air: races, wrestling and boxing. The son of Alcinous asked Odysseus if he would care to take part in the games, but Odysseus answered that he was too heavy at heart. To this a young man, Euryalus, said that Odysseus was probably a captain of a merchant ship, a tradesman, not a sportsman.

At this Odysseus was ill pleased, and replied that while he was young and happy he was well skilled in all sports, but now he was heavy and weak with war and wandering. Still, he would show what he could do. Then he seized a heavy weight, much heavier than any that the Phaeacians used in putting the stone. He whirled it up, and hurled it far—far beyond the farthest mark that the Phaeacians had reached when putting a lighter weight. Then he challenged any man to run a race with him or box with him, or shoot at a mark with him. Only his speed in running did he doubt, for his limbs were stiffened by the sea. Perhaps Alcinous saw that it would go ill with any man who matched himself against the stranger, so he sent for the harper, who sang a merry song, and then he made the young men dance and play ball, and bade the elder men go and bring rich presents of gold and garments for the wanderer. Alcinous himself gave a beautiful coffer and chest and a great golden cup, and Arete tied up all the gifts in the coffer, while the damsels took Odysseus to the bath and bathed him and anointed him with oil.

As he left the bath he met Nausicaa, standing at the entrance of the hall. She bade him goodbye, rather sadly, saying: 'Farewe-

and do not soon forget me in your own country, for to me you owe the ransom of your life.'

'May the gods grant me to see my own country, lady,' he answered, 'for there I will think of you with worship, as I think of the blessed gods, all my days, for to you, lady, I owe my very life.'

These were the last words they spoke to each other, for Nausicaa did not sit at meat in the hall with the great company of men. When they had taken supper the blind harper sang again a song about the deeds of Odysseus at Troy, and again Odysseus wept, so that Alcinous asked him: 'Hast thou lost a dear friend or a kinsman in the great war?'

Then Odysseus spoke out: 'I am Odysseus, Laertes' son, of whom all men have heard tell.'

While they sat amazed he began and told them the whole story of his adventures, from the day when he left Troy till he arrived at Calypso's island; he had already told them how he was shipwrecked on his way thence to Phaeacia.

All that wonderful story he told to their pleasure, and Euryalus made amends for his rude words at the games, and gave Odysseus a beautiful sword of bronze with an ivory hilt set with studs of gold. Many other gifts were given to him, and were carried and stored on board the ship which had been made ready, and then Odysseus spoke goodbye to the queen, saying: 'Be happy, O Queen, till old age and death come to you, as they come to all. Be joyful in your house with your children and your people, and Alcinous the king.' Then he departed, and lay down on sheets and cloaks in the raised deck of the ship, and soundly he slept while the fifty oars divided the waters of the sea and drove the ship to Ithaca.



VII

HOW ODYSSEUS CAME TO HIS OWN COUNTRY, AND FOR SAFETY DISGUISED HIMSELF AS AN OLD BEGGAR MAN

WHEN Odysseus awoke he found himself alone, wrapped in the linen sheet and the bright coverlet, and he knew not where he was. The Phaeacians had carried him from the ship as he slept and put him on shore, and placed all the rich gifts that had been given him under a tree and then had sailed away. There was a morning mist that hid the land, and Odysseus did not know the haven of his own island, Ithaca, and the rock whence sprang a fountain of the water fairies that men call Naiads. He thought that the Phaeacians had set him in a strange country, so he counted all his goods, and then walked up and

down sadly by the seashore. Here he met a young man, delicately clad, like a king's son, with a double mantle, such as kings wear, folded round his shoulders, and a spear in his hand. 'Tell me pray,' said Odysseus, 'what land is this, and what men dwell here?'

The young man said: 'Truly, stranger, you know little, or you come from far away. This isle is Ithaca, and the name of it is known even in Troyland.'

Odysseus was glad indeed to learn that he was at home at last; but how the young men who had grown up since he went away would treat him, all alone as he was, he could not tell. So he did not let out that he was Odysseus the king, but said that he was a Cretan. The stranger would wonder why a Cretan had come alone to Ithaca, with great riches, and yet did not know that he was there. So he pretended that in Crete a son of Idomeneus had tried to rob him of all the spoil he took at Troy, and that he had killed this prince and packed his wealth and fled on board a ship of the Phoenicians, who promised to land him at Pylos. But the wind had borne them out of their way, and they had all landed and slept on shore here; but the Phoenicians had left him asleep and gone off in the dawn.

On this the young man laughed, and suddenly appeared as the great goddess, Pallas Athene. 'How clever you are!' she said. 'Yet you did not know me who helped you in Troyland. But much trouble lies before you, and you must not let man or woman know who you really are, your enemies are so many and powerful.'

'You never helped me in my dangers on the sea,' said Odysseus. 'And now do you make mock of me, or is this really mine own country?'

'I had no mind', said the goddess, 'to quarrel with my uncle the Sea God, who had a feud against you for the blinding of his

son, the Cyclops. But come, you shall see this is really Ithaca,' and she scattered the white mist, and Odysseus saw and knew the pleasant cave of the Naiads, and the forests on the side of the mountain called Neriton. So he knelt down and kissed the dear earth of his own country, and prayed to the Naiads of the cave. Then the goddess helped him to hide all his gold and bronze and other presents in a secret place in the cavern; and she taught him how, being lonely as he was, he might destroy the proud wooers of his wife, who would certainly desire to take his life.

The goddess began by disguising Odysseus, so that his skin seemed wrinkled and his hair thin and his eyes dull, and she gave him dirty old wraps for clothes, and over all a great bald skin of a stag, like that which he wore when he stole into Troy disguised as a beggar. She gave him a staff too, and a wallet to hold scraps of broken food. There was not a man or a women that knew Odysseus in this disguise. Next the goddess bade him go across the island to his own swineherd, who remained faithful to him, and to stay there among the swine till she brought home Telemachus, who was visiting Helen and Menelaus in Lacedaemon. She fled away to Lacedaemon, and Odysseus climbed the hills that lay between the cavern and the farm where the swineherd lived.

When Odysseus reached the farmhouse the swineherd Eumaeus was sitting alone in front of his door, making himself a pair of brogues out of the skin of an ox. He was a very honest man, and though he was a slave he was the son of a prince in his own country. When he was a little child some Phoenicians came in their ship to his father's house and made friends with his nurse who was a Phoenician woman. One of them, who made love to her, asked her who she was, and she said that her father was a rich man in Sidon, but that pirates had carried her away and sold her to her master. The Phoenicians promised to bring her back to

Sidon, and she fled to their ship, carrying with her the child whom she nursed, little Eumaeus; she also stole three cups of gold. The woman died at sea, and the pirates sold the boy to Laertes, the father of Odysseus, who treated him kindly. Eumaeus was fond of the family which he served, and he hated the proud wooers for their insolence.

When Odysseus came near his house the four great dogs rushed out and barked at him; they would have bitten too, but Eumaeus ran up and threw stones at them, and no farm dog can face a shower of stones. He took Odysseus into his house, gave him food and wine, and told him all about the greed and pride of the wooers. Odysseus said that the master of Eumaeus would certainly come home, and told a long story about himself. He was a Cretan, he said, and had fought at Troy, and later had been shipwrecked, but reached a country called Thesprotia, where he learned that Odysseus was alive, and was soon to leave Thesprotia and return to Ithaca.

Eumaeus did not believe this tale and supposed that the beggar man only meant to say what he would like to hear. However, he gave Odysseus a good dinner of his own pork, and Odysseus amused him and his fellow slaves with stories about the siege of Troy till it was bedtime.

In the meantime Athene had gone to Lacedaemon to the house of Menelaus, where Telemachus was lying awake. She told him that Penelope, his mother, meant to marry one of the wooers, and advised him to sail home at once, avoiding the strait between Ithaca and another isle, where his enemies were lying in wait to kill him. When he reached Ithaca he must send his oarsmen to the town, but himself walk across the island to see the swineherd. In the morning Telemachus and his friend Pisistratus said goodbye to Menelaus and Helen, who wished to make him presents, and so went to their treasure house. Now when they came to the place

where the treasures were stored, then Atrides took a double cup, and bade his son Megapenthes to bear a mixing bowl of silver. And Helen stood by the coffers, wherein were her robes of curious needlework which she herself had wrought. So Helen, the fair lady, lifted one and brought it out—the widest and most beautifully embroidered of all—and it shone like a star and lay far beneath the rest.

Then they went back through the house till they came to Telemachus; and Menelaus of the fair hair spake to him, saying:

‘Telemachus, may Zeus the thunderer and the lord of Hera in very truth bring about thy return according to the desire of thy heart. And of the gifts, such as are treasures stored in my house, I will give thee the goodliest and greatest of price. I will give thee a mixing bowl beautifully wrought; it is all of silver, and the lips thereof are finished with gold—the work of Hephaestus; and the hero Phardimus, the king of the Sidonians, gave it to me when his house sheltered me on my coming thither. This cup I would give to thee.’

Therewith the hero Atrides set the double cup in his hands And the strong Megapenthes bare the shining silver bowl and set it before him. And Helen came up, beautiful Helen, with the robe in her hands, and spake and hailed him:

‘Lo! I too give thee this gift, dear child, a memorial of the hands of Helen, against the day of thy desire, even of thy bridal for thy bride to wear it. But meanwhile let it lie by thy dearmother in her chamber. And may joy go with thee to thy well-builded house and thine own country.’

Just when Telemachus was leaving her palace door an eagle stooped from the sky and flew away with a great white goose that was feeding on the grass, and the farm servants rushed out shouting, but the eagle passed away to the right hand, across the horses of Pisistratus.

Then Helen explained the meaning of this omen. 'Hear me, and I will prophesy as the immortals put it into my heart, and as I deem it will be accomplished. Even as yonder eagle came down from the hill, the place of his birth and kin, and snatched away the goose that was fostered in the house, even so shall Odysseus return home after much trial and long wanderings and take vengeance; yea! or even now is he at home and sowing the seeds of evil for all the wooers.' We are told no more about Helen of the fair hands, except that she and Menelaus never died, but were carried by the gods to the beautiful Elysian plain, a happy place where war and trouble never came, nor old age, nor death. After that she was worshipped in her own country as if she had been a goddess, kind, gentle and beautiful.

Telemachus thanked Helen for prophesying good luck, and he drove to the city of Nestor on the sea, but was afraid to go near the old king, who would have kept him and entertained him, while he must sail at once for Ithaca. He went to his own ship in the harbour, and, while his crew made ready to sail, there came a man running hard, and in great fear of the avenger of blood. This was a second-sighted man, called Theoclymenus, and he implored Telemachus to take him to Ithaca, for he had slain a man in his own country, who had killed one of his brothers, and now the brothers and cousins of that man were pursuing him to take his life. Telemachus made him welcome, and so sailed north to Ithaca, wondering whether he should be able to slip past the wooers, who were lying in wait to kill him. Happily the ship of Telemachus passed them unseen in the night, and arrived at Ithaca. He sent his crew to the town, and was just starting to walk across the island to the swineherd's house, when the second-sighted man asked what *he* should do. Telemachus told Piraeus, one of his friends, to take the man home and be kind to him, which he gladly promised to do, and then he set off to seek the swineherd.

The swineherd, with Odysseus, had just lit a fire to cook breakfast, when they saw the farm dogs frolicking round a young man who was walking towards the house. The dogs welcomed him, for he was no stranger, but Telemachus. Up leaped the swineherd in delight, and the bowl in which he was mixing wine and water fell from his hands. He had been unhappy for fear the wooers who lay in wait for Telemachus should kill him, and he ran and embraced the young man as gladly as a father welcomes a son who has long been in a far country. Telemachus too was anxious to hear whether his mother had married one of the wooers, and glad to know that she still bore her troubles patiently.

When Telemachus stepped into the swineherd's house Odysseus arose from his seat, but Telemachus bade the old beggar man sit down again, and a pile of brushwood with a fleece thrown over it was brought for himself. They breakfasted on what was ready, cold pork, wheaten bread and wine in cups of ivy wood, and Eumeus told Telemachus that the old beggar gave himself out as a wanderer from Crete. Telemachus answered that he could not take strangers into his mother's house, for he was unable to protect them against the violence of the wooers, but he would give the wanderer clothes and shoes and a sword, and he might stay at the farm. He sent the swineherd to tell his mother Penelope, that he had returned in safety, and Eumeus started on his journey to the town.

At this moment the farm dogs, which had been taking their share of the breakfast, began to whine and bristle up, and slunk with their tails between their legs to the inmost corner of the room. Telemachus could not think why they were afraid, or what, but Odysseus saw the goddess Athene, who appeared to him alone, and the dogs knew that something strange and unearthly was coming to the door. Odysseus went out, and Athene bade him tell Telemachus who he really was, now that they were

alone, and she touched Odysseus with her golden wand and made him appear like himself, and his clothes like a king's raiment.

Telemachus, who neither saw nor heard Athene, wondered greatly, and thought the beggar man must be some god, wandering in disguise. But Odysseus said: 'No god am I, but thine own father,' and they embraced each other and wept for joy.

At last Odysseus told Telemachus how he had come home in a ship of the Phaeacians, and how his treasure was hidden in the cave of the Naiads, and asked him how many the wooers were, and how they might drive them from the house. Telemachus replied that the wooers were one hundred and eight, and that Medon, a servant of his own, took part with them; there was also the minstrel of the house, whom they compelled to sing at their feasts. They were all strong young men, each with his sword at his side, but they had with them no shields, helmets and breast-plates. Odysseus said that with the help of the goddess he hoped to get the better of them, many as they were. Telemachus must go to the house, and Odysseus would come next day, in the disguise of an old beggar. However ill the wooers might use him, Telemachus must take no notice, beyond saying that they ought to behave better. Odysseus, when he saw a good chance, would give Telemachus a sign to take away the shields, helmets and weapons that hung on the walls of the great hall, and to hide them in a secret place. If the wooers missed them he must say, first that the smoke of the fire was spoiling them; and, again, that they were better out of the reach of the wooers, in case they quarrelled over their wine. Telemachus must keep two swords, two spears and two shields for himself and Odysseus to use, if they saw a chance, and he must let neither man nor women know that the old beggar man was his father.

While they were talking one of the crew of Telemachus and

THE ADVENTURES OF ODYSSEUS

the swineherd went to Penelope and told her how her son had landed. On hearing this the wooers held a council as to how they should behave to him: Antinous was for killing him, but Amphinomus and Eurymachus were for waiting, and seeing what would happen. Before Eumeus came back from his errand to Penelope, Athene changed Odysseus into the dirty old beggar again.



VIII

ODYSSEUS COMES DISGUISED AS A BEGGAR TO HIS OWN PALACE

NEXT morning Telemachus went home and comforted his mother and told her how he had been with Nestor and Menelaus and seen her cousin, Helen of the fair hands; but this did not seem to interest Penelope, who thought that her beautiful cousin was the cause of all her misfortunes. Then Theoclymenus, the second-sighted man whom Telemachus brought from Pylos, prophesied to Penelope that Odysseus was now in Ithaca, taking thought how he might kill the wooers, who were then practising spear-throwing at a mark, while some of them were killing swine and a cow for breakfast.

Meanwhile Odysseus, in disguise, and the swineherd were coming near the town, and there they met the goatherd, Melanthius, who was a friend of the wooers, and an insolent and violent slave. He insulted the old beggar and advised him not to come near the house of Odysseus and kicked him off the road. Then Odysseus was tempted to slay him with his hands, but he controlled himself lest he should be discovered, and he and Eumaeus walked slowly to the palace. As they lingered outside the court, lo! a hound raised up his head and pricked his ears,

even where he lay—Argos, the hound of Odysseus, of the hardy heart, which of old himself had bred. Now in time past the young men used to lead the hound against wild goats and deer and hares but as then he lay despised (his master being afar) in the deep dung of mules and kine, whereof an ample bed was spread before the doors till the slaves of Odysseus should carry it away to dung therewith his wide demesne. There lay the dog Argos, full of vermin. Yet even now, when he was aware of Odysseus standing by, he wagged his tail and dropped both his ears, but nearer to his master he had not now the strength to draw. But Odysseus looked aside and wiped away a tear that he easily hid from Eumaeus, and straightway he asked him, saying:

'Eumaeus, verily this is a great marvel: this hound lying here in the dung. Truly he is goodly of growth, but I know not certainly if he have speed with this beauty, or if he be comely only, like men's trencher dogs that their lords keep for the pleasure of the eye.'

Then answered the swineherd Eumaeus: 'In very truth this is the dog of a man that has died in a far land. If he were what once he was in limb and in the feats of the chase, when Odysseus left him to go to Troy, soon wouldst thou marvel at the sight of his swiftness and his strength. There was no beast that could flee from him in the deep places of the wood when he was in pursuit for even on a track he was the keenest hound. But now he is holden in an evil case, and his lord hath perished far from his own country, and the careless women take no charge of him.'

Therewith he passed within the fair-lying house, and went straight to the hall, to the company of the proud wooers. But upon Argos came death even in the hour that he beheld Odysseus again, in the twentieth year.

Thus the good dog knew Odysseus, though Penelope did not know him when she saw him, and tears came into Odysseus'

eyes as he stood above the body of the hound that loved him well. Eumaeus went into the house, but Odysseus sat down where it was the custom for beggars to sit, on the wooden threshold outside the door of the hall. Telemachus saw him, from his high seat under the pillars on each side of the fire, in the middle of the room, and bade Eumaeus carry a loaf and a piece of pork to the beggar, who laid them in his wallet between his feet, and ate. Then he thought he would try if there were one courteous man among the wooers, and he entered the hall and began to beg among them. Some gave him crusts and bones, but Antinous caught up a footstool and struck him hard on the shoulder. 'May death come upon Antinous before his wedding day!' said Odysseus, and even the other wooers rebuked him for striking a beggar.

Penelope heard of this, and told Eumaeus to bring the beggar to her; she thought he might have news of her husband. But Odysseus made Eumaeus say that he had been struck once in the hall, and would not come to her till after sunset, when the wooers left the house. Then Eumaeus went to his own farmhouse, after telling Telemachus that he would come next day, driving swine for the wooers to eat.

Odysseus was the new beggar in Ithaca: he soon found that he had a rival, an old familiar beggar named Irus. This man came up to the palace, and was angry when he saw a newcomer sitting in the doorway.

'Get up,' he said, 'I ought to drag you away by the foot: begone before we quarrel!'

'There is room enough for both of us,' said Odysseus, 'do not anger me.'

Irus challenged him to fight, and the wooers thought this good sport, and they made a ring, and promised that the winner should be beggar-in-chief, and have the post to himself. Odysseus asked

the wooers to give him fair play, and not to interfere, and then he stripped his shoulders and kilted up his rags, showing strong arms and legs. As for Irus he began to tremble, but Antinoüs forced him to fight, and the two put up their hands. Irus struck at the shoulder of Odysseus, who hit him with his right fist beneath the ear, and he fell, the blood gushing from his mouth and his heels drumming in the ground, and Odysseus dragged him from the doorway and propped him against the wall of the court, while the wooers laughed. Then Odysseus spoke grave to Amphinomus, telling him that it would be wise in him to go home, for that if Odysseus came back it might not be so easy to escape his hands.

After sunset Odysseus spoke so fiercely to the maidens Penelope, who insulted him, that they ran to their own room but Eurymachus threw a footstool at him. He slipped out of the way, and the stool hit the cupbearer and knocked him down, and all was disorder in the hall. The wooers themselves were weary of the noise and disorder, and went home to the houses in the town where they slept. Then Telemachus and Odysseus, being alone, hid the shields and helmets and spears that hung on the walls of the hall in an armoury within the house, and when this was done Telemachus went to sleep in his own chamber, in the courtyard, and Odysseus waited till Penelope should come into the hall.

Odysseus sat in the dusky hall, where the wood in the braziers that gave light had burned low, and waited to see the face of his wife, for whom he had left beautiful Calypso. The maidens Penelope came trooping, laughing, and cleared away the food and the cups, and put faggots in the braziers. They were all good girls, in love with the handsome wooers, and one of them, Melantho, bade Odysseus go away and sleep at the blacksmith's forge, lest he should be beaten with a torch. Penelope he

Melanthro, whom she had herself brought up, and she rebuked her, and ordered a chair to be brought for Odysseus. When he was seated she asked him who he was, and he praised her beauty, for she was still very fair, but did not answer her question. She insisted that he should tell her who he was, and he said that he was a Cretan prince, the younger brother of Idomeneus, and that he did not go to fight in Troyland. In Crete he stayed, and met Odysseus, who stopped there on his way to Troy, and he entertained Odysseus for a fortnight. Penelope wept when she heard that the stranger had seen her husband, but as false stories were often told to her by strangers who came to Ithaca, she asked how Odysseus was dressed, and what manner of men were with him.

The beggar said that Odysseus wore a double mantle of purple. clasped with a gold brooch fastened by two safety-pins (for these were used at that time), and on the face of the brooch was a figure of a hound holding a struggling fawn in his forepaws. (Many such brooches have been found in the graves in Greece.) Beneath his mantle Odysseus wore a shining smock, smooth and glittering like the skin of an onion. Probably it was made of silk: women greatly admired it. With him was a squire named Eurybates, a brown-shouldered man.

On hearing all this Penelope wept again and said that she herself had given Odysseus the brooch and the garments. She now knew that the beggar had really met Odysseus, and he went on to tell her that in his wanderings he had heard how Odysseus was still alive, though he had lost all his company, and that he had gone to Dodona in the west of Greece to ask for advice from the oak tree of Zeus, the whispering oak tree, as to how he should come home, openly or secretly. Certainly, he said, Odysseus would return that year.

Penelope was still unable to believe in such good news, but she bade Eurycleia, the old nurse, wash the feet of the beggar in warm

water, so a foot-bath was brought. Odysseus turned his face away from the firelight, for the nurse said that he was very like his master. As she washed his legs she noticed the long scar of the wound made by the boar when he hunted with his cousins long ago before he was married. The nurse knew him now and spoke to him in a whisper, calling him by his name. But he caught her



throat with his hand, and asked why she would cause his death for the wooers would slay him if they knew who he was. Eurycleia called him her child, and promised that she would be silent, and then she went to fetch more hot water, for she had let his feet fall into the bath and upset it when she found the scar.

When Eurycleia had washed him Penelope told the beggar that she could no longer refuse to marry one of the wooers. Odysseus had left a great bow in the house, the old bow of King Eurytus that few could bend, and he had left twelve iron axes, made with round opening in the blade of each. Axes of this shape have been

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found at Lacedaemon, where Helen lived, so we know what the axes of Odysseus were like. When he was at home he used to set twelve of them in a straight line, and shoot an arrow through the twelve holes in the blades. Penelope therefore intended next day to bring the bow and the axes to the wooers, and to marry any one of them who could string the bow and shoot an arrow through the twelve axes.

'I think', said the beggar, 'that Odysseus will be here before any of the wooers have bent his bow.' Then Penelope went to her upper chamber, and Odysseus slept in an outer gallery of the house on piled-up sheepskins.

There Odysseus lay, thinking how he might destroy all the wooers, and the goddess Athene came and comforted him, and in the morning he rose and made his prayer to Zeus, asking for signs of his favour. There came, first a peal of thunder, and then the voice of a woman, weak and old, who was grinding corn to make bread for the wooers. All the other women of the mill had done their work and were asleep, but she was feeble and the round upper stone of the quern, that she rolled on the corn above the understone, was too heavy for her.

She prayed and said: 'Father Zeus, King of Gods and men, loudly hast thou thundered. Grant to me my prayer, unhappy as I am. May this be the last day of the feasting of the wooers in the hall of Odysseus: they have loosened my knees with cruel labour in grinding barley for them: may they now sup their last!' Hearing this prayer Odysseus was glad, for he thought it a lucky sign. Soon the servants were at work, and Eumaeus came with swine, and was as courteous to the beggar as Melanthius—who brought some goats—was insolent. The cowherd, called Philoetius, also arrived; he hated the wooers, and spoke friendly to the beggar. Last appeared the wooers, and went in to their meal, while Telemachus bade the beggar sit on a seat just within the

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hall, and told the servants to give him as good a share of the food as any of them received. One wooer, Ctesippus, said: 'His fair share this beggar man has had, as is right, but I will give him a present over and above it!' Then he picked up the foot of an ox, and threw it with all his might at Odysseus, who merely moved aside, and the ox foot struck the wall.

Telemachus rebuked him, and the wooers began to laugh wildly and to weep, they knew not why, but Theoclymenus, the second-sighted man, knew that they were all fey men, that is, doomed to die, for such men are gay without reason. 'Unhappy that you are,' cried Theoclymenus, 'what is coming upon you? I see shrouds covering you about your knees and about your faces, and tears are on your cheeks, and the walls and the pillars of the roof are dripping blood, and in the porch and the court are your fetches, shadows of yourselves, hurrying hellward, and the sun is darkened.'

On this all the wooers laughed, and advised him to go out of doors, where he would see that the sun was shining. 'My eyes and ears serve me well,' said the second-sighted man, 'but out I will go, seeking no more of your company, for death is coming on every man of you.' Then he arose and went to the house of Piraeus, the friend of Telemachus. The wooers laughed all the louder, as fey men do, and told Telemachus that he was unlucky in his guests—one a beggar, the other a madman. But Telemachus kept watching his father while the wooers were cooking a meal that they did not live to enjoy.

Through the crowd of them came Penelope, holding in her hand the great bow of Eurytus, and a quiver full of arrows, while her maidens followed, carrying the chest in which lay the twelve iron axes. She stood up, stately and scornful, among the wooers, and told them that, as marry she must, she would take the man who could string the bow and shoot the arrow through the axes.

Telemachus said that he would make the first trial, and that if he succeeded he would not allow any man of the wooers to take his mother away with him from her own house. Then thrice he tried to string the bow, and the fourth time he would have strung it, but Odysseus made a sign to him, and he put it down. 'I am too weak,' he said; 'let a stronger man achieve this adventure.' So they tried each in turn, beginning with the man who sat next the great mixing bowl of wine, and so each rising in his turn.

First their prophet tried, Leiodes the Seer, who sat next the bowl, but his white hands were too weak, and he prophesied, saying that the bow would be the death of all of them. Then Antinous bade the goatherd light a fire, and bring grease to heat the bow, and make it more supple. They warmed and greased the bow, and one after another tried to bend it. Eumaeus and the cowherd went out into the court, and Odysseus followed them.

'Whose side would you two take', he asked, 'if Odysseus came home? Would you fight for him or for the wooers?'

'For Odysseus!' they both cried, 'and would that he was come indeed!'

'He is come, and I am he!' said Odysseus.

Then he promised to give them lands of their own if he was victorious, and he showed them the scar on his thigh that the boar dealt with his white tusk long ago. The two men kissed him and shed tears of joy, and Odysseus said that he would go back first into the hall, and that they were to follow him. He would ask to be allowed to try to bend the bow, and Eumaeus, whatever the wooers said, must place it in his hands, and then see that the women were locked up in their own separate hall. Philoetius was to fasten the door leading from the courtyard into the road. Odysseus then went back to his seat in the hall, near the door, and his servants followed.

Eurymachus was trying in vain to bend the bow, and Antinous

proposed to put off the trial till next day, and then sacrifice to the god Apollo, and make fresh efforts. They began to drink, but Odysseus asked to be allowed to try if he could string the bow. They told him that wine had made him impudent, and threatened to put him in a ship and send him to King Echetus, an ogre, who would cut him to pieces. But Penelope said that the beggar must try his strength, not that she would marry him if he succeeded. She would only give him new clothes, a sword and a spear, and send him wherever he wanted to go. Telemachus cried out that the bow was his own; he would make a present of it to the beggar if he chose, and he bade his mother join her maidens, and work at her weaving. She was amazed to hear her son speak like the master of the house, and she went upstairs with her maidens to her own room.

Eumaeus was carrying the bow to Odysseus, when the wooers made such an uproar that he laid it down, in fear for his life. But Telemachus threatened to punish him if he did not obey his master, so he placed the bow in the hands of Odysseus, and then went and told Eurycleia to lock the women servants up in their own separate hall. Philoetius slipped into the courtyard and made the gates fast with a strong rope, and then came back and watched Odysseus, who was turning the bow this way and that, to see if the horns were still sound, for horns were then used in bow-making. The wooers were mocking him, but suddenly he bent and strung the great bow as easily as a harper fastens a new string to his harp. He tried the string, and it twanged like the note of a swallow. He took up an arrow that lay on the table (the others were in the quiver beside him), fitted it to the string and from the chair where he sat he shot it through all the twelve axe-heads. 'Your guest has done you no dishonour, Telemachus,' he said, 'but surely it is time to eat,' and he nodded. Telemachus drew his sword, took a spear in his lefthand and stood up beside Odysseus.



IX

THE SLAYING OF THE WOOERS

O DYSSEUS let all his rags fall down, and with one leap he reached the high threshold, the door being behind him, and he dropped the arrows from the quiver at his feet. 'Now', he said, 'I will strike another mark that no man yet has stricken!' He aimed the arrow at Antinous, who was drinking out of a golden cup. The arrow passed clean through the throat of Antinous; he fell, the cup rang on the ground and the wooers leaped up, looking round the walls for shields and spears, but the walls were bare.

'Thou shalt die, and vultures shall devour thee!' they shouted, thinking the beggar had let the arrow fly by mischance.

'Dogs!' he answered, 'ye said that never should I come home from Troy; ye wasted my goods and insulted my wife and had no fear of the gods, but now the day of death has come upon you! Fight or flee, if you may, but some shall not escape!'

'Draw your blades!' cried Eurymachus to the others; 'draw your blades, and hold up the tables as shields against this man's arrows. Have at him, and drive him from the doorway.'

He drew his own sword, and leaped on Odysseus with a cry, but the swift arrow pierced his breast, and he fell and died. Then Amphinomus rushed towards Odysseus, but Telemachus sent his spear from behind through his shoulders.

He could not draw forth the spear, but he ran to his father, and said: 'Let me bring shields, spears and helmets from the inner chamber for us, and for the swineherd and cowherd.'

'Go!' said Odysseus, and Telemachus ran through a narrow doorway, down a gallery to the secret chamber, and brought four shields, four helmets and eight spears, and the men armed themselves, while Odysseus kept shooting down the wooers. When his arrows were spent he armed himself, protected by the other three. But the goatherd, Melanthius, knew a way of reaching the armoury, and he climbed up and brought twelve helmets, spears and shields to the wooers.

Odysseus thought that one of the women was showering down the weapons into the hall, but the swineherd and cowherd went to the armoury, through the doorway, as Telemachus had gone, and there they caught Melanthius, and bound him like a bundle, with a rope, and, throwing the rope over a rafter, dragged him up and fastened him there, and left him swinging. Then they ran back to Odysseus, four men keeping the doorway against all the wooers that were not yet slain. But the goddess Athene appeared to Odysseus in the form of Mentor, and gave him courage. He needed it, for the wooers, having spears, threw them in volleys,

six at a time, at the four. They missed, but the spears of the four slew each his man. Again the wooers threw, and dealt two or three slight wounds, but the spears of the four were winged with death. They charged, striking with spear and sword, into the crowd, who lost heart, and flew here and there, crying for mercy and falling at every blow. Odysseus slew the prophet Leiodes, but Phemius, the minstrel, he spared, for he had done no wrong, and Medon, a slave, crept out from beneath an oxhide, where he had been lying, and asked Telemachus to pity him, and Odysseus sent him and the minstrel into the courtyard, where they sat trembling. All the rest of the wooers lay dead in heaps, like heaps of fish on the seashore, when they have been netted and drawn to land.

Then Odysseus sent Telemachus to bring Eurycleia, who, when she came and saw the wooers dead, raised a scream of joy, but Odysseus said: 'It is an unholy thing to boast over the dead men.' He bade Telemachus and the servants carry the corpses into the courtyard, and he made the women wash and clean the hall, and the seats and tables and the pillars. When all was clean they took Melanthius and slew him, and then they washed themselves, and the maidens who were faithful to Penelope came out of their rooms, with torches in their hands, for it was now night, and they kissed Odysseus with tears of joy. These were not young women, for Odysseus remembered all of them.

Meanwhile old Eurycleia ran to tell Penelope all the good news: up the stairs to her chamber she ran, tripping and falling and rising and laughing for joy. In she came and awakened Penelope, saying:

'Come and see what you have long desired: Odysseus in his own house, and all the wicked wooers slain by the sword.'

'Surely you are mad, dear nurse,' said Penelope, 'to waken me with such a wild story. Never have I slept so sound since

Odysseus went to that ill Ilios, never to be named. Angry would I have been with any of the girls that wakened me with such a silly story; but you are old: go back to the women's working room.'

The good nurse answered: 'Indeed I tell you no silly tale. Indeed he is in the hall; he is that poor guest whom all men struck and insulted, but Telemachus knew his father.'

Then Penelope leaped up gladly and kissed the nurse, but yet she was not sure that her husband had come; she feared that it might be some god disguised as a man, or some evil man pretending to be Odysseus.

'Surely Odysseus has met his death far away,' she said, and though Eurycleia vowed that she herself had seen the scar dealt by the boar long ago she would not be convinced. 'None the less,' she said, 'let us go and see my son, and the wooers lying dead, and the man who slew them.'

So they went down the stairs and along a gallery on the ground floor that led into the courtyard, and so entered the door of the hall, and crossed the high stone threshold on which Odysseus stood when he shot down Antinous. Penelope went up to the hearth and sat opposite Odysseus, who was leaning against one of the four tall pillars that supported the roof; there she sat and gazed at him, still wearing his rags and still not cleansed from the blood of battle. She did not know him and was silent, though Telemachus called her hard of belief and cold of heart.

'My child,' she said, 'I am bewildered and can hardly speak, but if this man is Odysseus he knows things unknown to any except him and me.' Then Odysseus bade Telemachus go to the baths and wash, and put on fresh garments, and bade the maidens bring the minstrel to play music, while they danced in the hall. In the town the friends and kinsfolk of the wooers did not know that they were dead, and when they heard the music they would not guess that anything strange had happened. It was necessary that

nobody should know, for if the kinsfolk of the dead men learned the truth they would seek to take revenge, and might burn down the house. Indeed Odysseus was still in great danger, for the law was that the brothers and cousins of slain men must slay their slayers, and the dead were many, and had many clansmen.



Now Eurynome bathed Odysseus himself, and anointed him with oil, and clad him in new raiment, so that he looked like himself again, full of strength and beauty. He sat down on his own high seat beside the fire and said: 'Lady, you are the fairest and most cruel queen alive. No other woman would harden her heart against her husband, come home through many dangers after so many years. Nurse,' he cried to Eurykleia, 'strew me a bed to lie alone, for her heart is hard as iron.'

Now Penelope put him to a trial. 'Eurykleia,' she said, 'strew a bed for him outside the bridal chamber that he built for himself, and bring the good bedstead out of that room for him.'

'How can any man bring out that bedstead?' said Odysseus.

'Did I not make it with my own hands, with a standing tree for the bedpost? No man could move that bed unless he first cut down the tree trunk.'

Then at last Penelope ran to Odysseus and threw her arms round his neck, kissing him, and said: 'Do not be angry, for always I have feared that some strange man of cunning would come and deceive me, pretending to be my lord. But now you have told me the secret of the bed, which no mortal has ever seen or knows but you and I, and my maiden whom I brought from my own home, and who kept the doors of our chamber.' Then they embraced, and it seemed as if her white arms would never quite leave their hold on his neck.

Odysseus told her many things, all the story of his wanderings, and how he must wander again, on land, not on the sea, till he came to the country of men who had never seen salt. 'The gods will defend you and bring you home to your rest in the end,' said Penelope, and then they went to their own chamber, and Eurydice went before them with lighted torches in her hands, for the gods had brought them to the haven where they would be.



X

THE END

WITH the coming of the golden Dawn Odysseus awoke, for he had still much to do. He and Telemachus and the cowherd and Eumaeus put on full armour, and took swords and spears, and walked to the farm where old Laertes, the father of Odysseus, lived among his servants and worked in his garden. Odysseus sent the others into the farmhouse to bid the old housekeeper get breakfast ready, and he went alone to the vines, being sure that his father was at work among them.

There the old man was, in his rough gardening clothes, with leather gloves on, and patched leather leggings, digging hard. His servants had gone to gather loose stones to make a rough stone dike, and he was all alone. He never looked up till Odysseus went to him, and asked him whose slave he was, and who owned the garden. He said that he was a stranger in Ithaca, but that he had once met the king of the island, who declared that one Laertes was his father.

Laertes was amazed at seeing a warrior all in mail come into his garden, but said that he was the father of Odysseus, who had long

been unheard of and unseen. ‘And who are you?’ he asked. ‘Where is your own country?’ Odysseus said that he came from Sicily, and that he had met Odysseus five years ago, and hoped that by this time he had come home.

Then the old man sat down and wept, and cast dust on his head, for Odysseus had not arrived from Sicily in five long years; certainly he must be dead. Odysseus could not bear to see his father weep, and told him that he was himself, come home at last, and that he had killed all the wooers.

But Laertes asked him to prove that he really was Odysseus, so he showed the scar on his leg, and, looking round the garden, he said: ‘Come, I will show you the very trees that you gave me when I was a little boy running about after you, and asking you for one thing or another, as children do. These thirteen pear trees are my very own; you gave them to me, and mine are these fifty rows of vines, and these forty fig trees.’

Then Laertes was fainting for joy, but Odysseus caught him in his arms and comforted him. But when he came to himself he sighed and said: ‘How shall we meet the feud of all the kin of the slain men in Ithaca and the other islands?’

‘Be of good courage, father,’ said Odysseus. ‘And now let us go to the farmhouse and breakfast with Telemachus.’

So Laertes first went to the baths, and then put on fresh raiment, and Odysseus wondered to see him look so straight and strong. ‘Would I were as strong as when I took the castle of Nericus long ago,’ said the old man, ‘and would that I had been in the fight against the wooers!’ Then all the old man’s servants came in, overjoyed at the return of Odysseus, and they breakfasted merrily together.

By this time all the people in the town knew that the wooers had been slain, and they crowded to the house of Odysseus in great sorrow, and gathered their dead and buried them, and then

met in the market-place. The father of Antinous, Eupeithes, spoke, and said that they would all be dishonoured if they did not slay Odysseus before he could escape to Nestor's house in Pylos. It was in vain that an old prophet told them that the young men had deserved their death. The most of the men ran home and put on armour, and Eupeithes led them towards the farm of Laertes, all in shining mail. But the gods in heaven had a care for Odysseus, and sent Athene to make peace between him and his subjects.

She did not come too soon, for the avengers were drawing near the farmhouse, which had a garrison of only twelve men: Odysseus, Laertes, Telemachus, the swineherd, the cowherd and servants of Laertes. They all armed themselves, and not choosing to defend the house, they went boldly out to meet their enemies. They encouraged each other, and Laertes prayed to Athene, and then threw his spear at Eupeithes. The spear passed clean through helmet and through head, and Eupeithes fell with a crash, and his armour rattled as he fell. But now Athene appeared and cried: 'Hold your hands, ye men of Ithaca, that no more blood may be shed, and peace may be made.' The foes of Odysseus, hearing the terrible voice of the goddess, turned and fled, and Odysseus uttered his war-cry, and was rushing among them, when a thunderbolt fell at his feet, and Athene bade him stop, lest he should anger Zeus, the Lord of Thunder. Gladly he obeyed, and peace was made with oaths and with sacrifice, peace in Ithaca and the islands.

Here ends the story of Odysseus, Laertes' son, for we do not know anything about his adventures when he went to seek a land of men who never heard of the sea, nor eat meat savoured with salt.